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Tuesday, April 2, 2013



Missed shots and quiet messaging at Easter Egg Roll

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President Barack Obama shows a girl how to roll her egg as first lady Michelle Obama looks on at the 135th annual White House Easter Egg Roll, on the South Lawn in Washington, April 1, 2013.

(Doug Mills/The New York Times)

Pope Francis visits St. Peter's tomb under Vatican

FRANCES D'EMILIO
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis on Monday took an emotional, close-up look at the tomb of Peter, the church's first pontiff, buried beneath St. Peter's Basilica, the Vatican said.

By doing so, Francis became the first pontiff to visit the necropolis, where pagans and early Christians were buried, since extensive archaeological excavations were conducted at the ancient site decades ago, the Vatican said.

The 45-minute "visit of devotion to the tomb of St. Peter" was private, the Vatican said, but it later released a video of it.

The basilica was built over the location where early Christians would gather in secret, at a time of perse-



Pope Francis, followed by Cardinal Angelo Comastri, right, and Bishop Vittorio Lanzani, partially hidden, visits the necropolis where pagans and early Christians were buried under St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican and where St. Peter is believed to be buried, Monday, April 1, 2013, during what was called the first-ever visit by a pope. The basilica was built over the location where early Christians would gather in secret, at a time of persecution in ancient Rome, to pray at an unmarked tomb believed to be that of Peter, the apostle Jesus chose to lead his church.

(AP Photo/L'Osservatore Romano)

cution in ancient Rome, to pray at an unmarked tomb believed to be that of Peter, the apostle Jesus chose to lead his church.

The Vatican first said Francis would pray at Peter's tomb, but later said he prayed instead in the basilica. The new pope "paused in silent prayer, in profound and emotional meditation" in the Clementine Chapel in the vast basilica that is "the closest place (in the basilica) to the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles," it said. During a tour of the necropolis conducted by its director and an Italian cardinal, the pope "climbed up a bit, got closer to the place where the tomb of St. Peter lies, exactly under the central altar and the dome of the basilica," the Vatican said. Francis walked down the entire main street of the ancient city of the dead, the statement said.

The streets of the necropolis are similar to those of ancient Rome, only they are flanked by tombs instead of shops and apartments.

The Vatican said Francis walked to the necropolis entrance from the hotel on the Vatican grounds where he lives, took the tour and later — after paying homage at the tombs of several popes in another underground level known as the grottoes, including Pius XII, Paul VI and John Paul I — strolled back to his residence. The underground excursion was a sharp departure from how popes in past years often spent the day after Easter, known in Italy as "little Easter." Those pontiffs would head to Castel Gandolfo, the Vatican palace in the Alban Hills, a short drive from Rome. But that oasis of sprawling gardens and strolling paths in the quaint hill town is occupied by the predecessor of Francis, Benedict XVI, who spent the last hours of his papacy there before becoming the first pope in 600 years to retire. Benedict is staying in Castel Gandolfo until a monastery at the Vatican in Rome can be readied for him. □

Missed shots and quiet messaging at Easter Egg Roll

JADA F. SMITH

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WASHINGTON — A man in a bunny suit, a YouTube sensation and a dismal free throw performance by the president got all the laughs at the White House Easter Egg Roll on Monday. But along with the more than 30,000 children who frolicked across the South Lawn of the White House in ruffle socks and pastel-colored neckties, families of the victims of gun violence served as reminders of the children who could not be there.

With a Senate vote on gun legislation expected in the coming weeks, the mother and brother of Hadiya Pendleton, the Chicago teenager who was fatally shot in her hometown after she performed at the president's inauguration, joined in the 135-year-old Easter tradition, as did families from Newtown, Conn., where a gunman killed 20 first graders and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

But the event, on a warm day in Washington, kept its traditionally festive tone, and Michelle Obama took advantage of another chance to push against childhood obesity.

The theme — "Be Healthy, Be Active, Be You!" — matched the first lady's "Let's Move!" initiative, which encourages active lifestyles and healthy eating. There were cooking

air balls, he finally handed the ball over to 10-year-old Kahron Campbell of Landover, Md., whom he assisted with a layup.

"He couldn't make one," Kahron said, according



President Barack Obama reacts after missing a basketball shot at the 135th annual White House Easter Egg Roll, in Washington, April 1, 2013.

(Doug Mills/The New York Times)

demonstrations with food industry figures like B. Smith and Ina Garten, as well as sports stations featuring NASCAR driver Danica Patrick and Adrian Peterson of the Minnesota Vikings.

But President Barack Obama seemed as though he had not been on the court in a while, missing 20 of the 22 shots he took while playing basketball with children and players from the Washington Wizards. After the bricks and

to a pool report. "I had to help him out."

Later, in the White House briefing room, reporters asked Jay Carney, the press secretary, whether he had talked to his boss about the performance.

"I have not spoken to him about that," Carney said, looking relieved at that fact.

"The president doesn't get to practice as much as he'd like to," he added, noting that "he's a pretty

good shot" and that "these are busy times."

Before cheering on excited toddlers and siblings in matching outfits during the egg roll, Obama and his family were introduced by Robbie Novak, the 9-year-old YouTube celebrity known as Kid President. Michelle Obama asked him to bring some of his signature pep and inspiration to the White House, telling him to "spend a little time in the Oval Office just fixing things up for this president." The Marine Corps Band played familiar tunes from "Spider-Man" and "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" as part of a tradition that started with President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1878.

Although there were long lines, and not everyone got to see the president — or even roll the eggs — the Easter spirit could not be cracked.

"My daughter was a little disappointed we didn't get to see the president or anyone in the family," said Ruth Ifill, who arrived at 6:55 a.m. with her husband, their two children and a friend's daughter. "But they enjoyed it, they had fun and they were excited the entire time." □

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Conn reaches deal on tough gun laws after Newtown

SUSAN HAIGH
Associated Press

HARTFORD, Connecticut

(AP)—State lawmakers announced a deal Monday on what they called some of the toughest gun laws in the country that were proposed after the December mass shooting in the state, including a ban on a new high-capacity ammunition magazine like the one in the massacre that left 20 children and six educators dead.

The proposal also called for background checks for private gun sales and a new registry for existing magazines that carry 10 or more bullets, something of a compromise for parents of Newtown victims who had wanted an outright ban on them, while legislators had proposed grandfathering them into the law.

The package also creates what lawmakers said is the nation's first statewide dangerous weapon offender registry, immediate universal background checks for all firearms sales and expansion of Connecticut's assault weapons ban.

A new state-issued eligibility certificate would be needed to purchase any rifle, shotgun or ammunition under the legislation.

To get the certificate, a buyer would need to be fingerprinted, take a firearms training course and undergo a national criminal background check and involuntary commitment or voluntary admission check.

The deal is "the most comprehensive package in the country because of its breadth," said Senate Minority Leader John McKinney, a Republican whose district includes Newtown. McKinney said people tend to focus on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, but he said "there's a lot here underneath the surface" addressing mental health and other issues.

The proposal was revealed to rank-and-file lawmakers Monday after weeks of negotiations among legislative leaders. A vote was expected later this week in the Legislature, where Democrats control both chambers, making passage all but assured. The bill would then be sent to

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, who has helped lead efforts to strengthen the state's gun laws. Both Democratic and Republican leaders were expected to support the

legislative leaders have been negotiating since early March, reviewing recommendations on guns, mental health care and school security in the wake of the shooting.

delivered a letter signed by 24 relatives that demanded that legislators include existing large-capacity ammunition magazines in an expected ban on the sale of magazines that carry 10 or more bullets.

Allowing such large-capacity magazines to remain in the hands of gun owners would leave a gaping loophole in the law, said Mark Barden, whose 7-year-old son, Daniel, was killed in the shooting.

"It doesn't prevent someone from going out of the state to purchase them and then bring them back. There's no way to track when they were purchased, so they can say, 'I had this before,'" Barden said. "So it's a big loophole."

The gunman in the Newtown shooting blasted his way into Sandy Hook Elementary School and fired off 154 shots with a Bushmaster .223-caliber rifle within five minutes. He went through six 30-round magazines, though half were not completely empty, and police said he had three other 30-round magazines in addition to one in the rifle. He gunned down 26 people, then shot himself to death with a handgun. □



Mark Barden, right, father of Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting victim Daniel Barden, speaks alongside his wife, Jackie, center, and other Newtown parents, at the Capitol in Hartford, Conn., Monday, April 1, 2013. Families of the school shooting victims were there to ask lawmakers to include a ban on existing high-capacity magazines in a legislation addressing gun control spurred by the massacre.

(AP Photo/Mara Lavitt)

proposal. Connecticut is sending a message to Washington and the rest of the country "this is the way to get this job done," said House Speaker Brendan Sharkey, a Democrat from Hamden.

Six relatives of Newtown victims visited the Capitol on Monday, asking lawmakers to include a ban on existing high-capacity magazines. Some handed out cards with photographs of their slain children. They

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White House: No military moves seen in North Korea



WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House says that despite bellicose rhetoric from North Korea the Obama administration has not seen changes in the re-

White House press secretary Jay Carney gestures as he answers questions during his daily news briefing at the White House in Washington, Monday, April 1, 2013.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

gime's military posture. White House press secretary Jay Carney said Monday the U.S. has not detected any military mobilization or repositioning of forces from Pyongyang to

back up the threats from North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Nonetheless the U.S. has made a point of publicizing its own recent military moves, including the deployment of bombers and F-22 stealth fighters to South Korea as part of two-month-long military exercises.

And on Monday U.S. officials said a Japan-based U.S. Navy guided-missile destroyer capable of shooting down ballistic missiles had been positioned slightly closer to the Korean peninsula, though still within its usual operating area. Last month, the Pentagon announced plans to in-

crease by 2017 the number of Alaska-based missile interceptors designed to shoot down any prospective North Korean missile launch aimed at U.S. territory. Pyongyang has reacted angrily to U.S.-South Korean military drills and a new round of U.N. and U.S. sanctions that followed North Korea's Feb. 12 underground nuclear test. Carney called the U.S. response "prudent." He noted that such tough talk from North Korea is part of a familiar pattern. Carney says the White House takes the threats "very seriously." But he says the rhetoric "is consistent with past behavior." □

Prosecutors seek execution in Colorado theater attack

DAN ELLIOTT
Associated Press

CENTENNIAL, Colorado

(AP) — For James Holmes, "justice is death," prosecutors said Monday in announcing they will seek his execution if he is convicted in the Colorado movie theater attack that killed 12 people.

The decision — disclosed in court just days after prosecutors publicly rejected

Holmes' offer to plead guilty if they took the death penalty off the table — elevated the already sensational case to a new level and could cause it to drag on for years.

"It's my determination and my intention that in this case, for James Eagan Holmes, justice is death," District Attorney George Brauchler said, adding that he had discussed the case

with 60 people who lost relatives in the July 20 shooting rampage by a gunman in a gas mask and body armor during a midnight showing of the latest Batman movie. There was no audible reaction from the 25-year-old former neuroscience graduate student, who sat with his back to reporters, or from victims' families in the courtroom. Holmes' parents sat side by side in the gallery, clutching hands with fingers intertwined. The decision had been widely predicted by legal analysts.

Within minutes of it becoming official, the trial was pushed back from August to next February and Judge William B. Sylvester removed himself from the case, saying that now that the charges carry the death penalty they will take years to resolve and he does not have the time to devote to such a drawn-out matter.

Despite the potential for more delays, some of those who lost loved ones were happy with prosecutors' decision.

"I had a huge adrenaline

rush," said Bryan Beard, whose best friend Alex Sullivan was killed in the attack. "I love the choice. I love it, I love it." He added: "I hope I'm in the room when he dies." But the prospect of a longer legal battle troubled others such as Pierce O'Farrill, who was shot three times. "It could be 10 or 15 years before he's executed. I would be in my 40s and I'm planning to have a family, and the thought of having to look back and reliving everything at that point in my life, it would be difficult," he said.

Legal observers said Holmes' lawyers publicly offered a guilty plea in what may have been a bid to gain support among victims' families for a deal that would spare them a painful trial and lengthy appeals. The prosecution and the defense could still reach a deal before the case goes to trial. Holmes' lawyers have indicated in court papers that they may instead pursue a defense of not guilty by reason of insanity. But that carries great risk: Prosecutors could argue that Holmes methodically

planned his attack, casting the theater, stockpiling weapons and booby-trapping his apartment with explosives. The judge newly assigned to the case, Carlos Samour Jr., warned defense lawyers that if they want to change Holmes' plea, the longer they wait the harder it will be to convince him to accept it. If Holmes is found not guilty by reason of insanity, he will be sent to the state mental hospital, then returned to prison after treatment. Colorado has three people on death row but has executed just one person over the past 45 years, in 1997. Samour is also considering whether a New York-based Fox News reporter should have to testify about how she obtained confidential information about Holmes. Jana Winter cited anonymous law enforcement officials in reporting that Holmes had sent a psychiatrist a notebook of drawings that foreshadowed the attack. Holmes' lawyers want to know who told Winter about the notebook, arguing that that person violated a gag order. □

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Suspicion in DA death shifts to white supremacists

JUAN A. LOZANO
N. MERCHANT

Associated Press

KAUFMAN, Texas (AP) — Authorities have said little about their investigation of the shooting deaths of a Texas district attorney and his wife two days after the killings, or any potential suspects, but suspicions have shifted to a white supremacist prison gang.

The gang has a long history of violence and retribution that was also the focus of a December law enforcement bulletin warning that its members might try to attack police or prosecutors. The deaths of Kaufman County District Attorney Mike McLellan and his wife were especially jarring because they happened just a couple of months after one of the county's assistant district attorneys, Mark Hasse, was killed near his courthouse office and less than two weeks after Colorado's prison chief was shot to death at his front door, apparently by a white supremacist ex-convict.

The Aryan Brotherhood of Texas has been in the state's prison system since the 1980s, when it began as a white supremacist gang that protected its



ATF agents walk into the home of Kaufman District Attorney Mike McLellan, Monday, April 1, 2013, in Kaufman, Texas. McLellan and his wife were murdered on Saturday at their home.

(AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez)

members and ran illegal activities, including drug distribution, according to Terry Pelz, a former Texas prison warden and expert on the gang.

The group is now believed to have more than 4,000 members in and out of prison who deal in a variety of criminal enterprises, including prostitution, robbery and murder.

It has a paramilitary structure with five factions around the state, Pelz said Monday. Each faction has a general, who is part of a steering committee known as the "Wheel," which con-

trols all criminal aspects of the gang, according to court papers.

Four top leaders of the group were indicted in October for crimes ranging from murder to drug trafficking. Two months later, authorities issued the bulletin warning that the gang might try to retaliate against law enforcement for the investigation that also led to the arrest of 30 other members.

At the time, prosecutors called the indictments "a devastating blow to the leadership" of the gang. Pelz said the indictments

might have fragmented the gang's leadership. Hasse's Jan. 31 death came on the same day as the first guilty pleas were entered in the indictment. No arrests have been made in his killing.

McLellan was part of a multi-agency task force that investigated the Aryan Brotherhood with help from the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration and police in Houston and Fort Worth. Detectives have declined to say if the Aryan Brotherhood is the focus of their investigation, but the state Department of Public Safety bulletin warned that the group is "involved in issuing orders to inflict 'mass casualties or death' to law enforcement officials involved in the recent case."

Killing law enforcement representatives would be uncharacteristic of the group, Pelz said.

"They don't go around killing officials," he said. "They don't draw heat upon themselves."

But Pelz, who worked in the Texas prison system for 21 years, said the gang has a history of threatening officials and of killing its own members or rivals.

The 18-count indictment accused gang members

of being involved in three murders of rival gang members, multiple attempted murders, kidnappings, assaults and conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and cocaine.

Some of the attempted murders in the indictment involved gang members who were targeted for not following orders or rules or who were believed to be cooperating with law enforcement. The indictment also alleges that gang members discussed killing a police officer in 2008 and allegedly ordered a subordinate gang member to kill a prospect "and to return the victim's severed finger as a trophy."

Meanwhile, law enforcement agencies throughout Texas were on high alert, and steps were being taken to better protect DAs and their staffs.

In Kaufman County, deputies escorted some employees into the courthouse Monday after the slayings stirred fears that other public employees could be targeted. Law enforcement officers were seen patrolling outside the courthouse, one holding a semi-automatic weapon, while others walked around inside. □

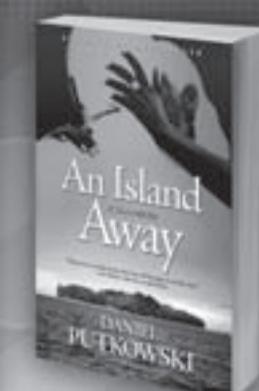
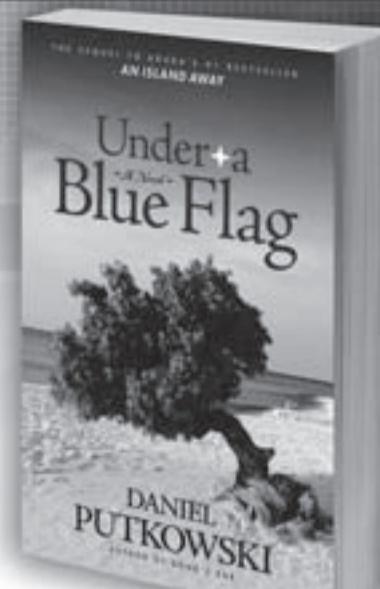
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Caroline Kennedy seen as likely choice for Japan envoy

MICHAEL D. SHEAR

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WASHINGTON — Caroline Kennedy, the daughter of former President John F. Kennedy, is close to being announced as the next U.S. ambassador to Japan, according to people familiar with the appointment process.

The vetting of Kennedy by the White House is almost complete, and an appointment could be announced in the coming weeks, along with the names of several other choices for high-profile diplomatic posts. Bloomberg News and The Washington Post first reported that Kennedy was under consideration.

Kennedy was an early supporter of President Barack Obama, offering forceful backing as he battled Hillary Rodham Clinton for the Democratic nomina-

tion in the 2008 presidential election. She also served as a co-chairwoman of Obama's 2012 re-election campaign.

The diplomatic assignment would vault Kennedy, a lawyer and author, into the kind of public life that her father and uncles pursued for decades. Esther Newberg,

the agent for Kennedy's current book, a compilation of poetry for young children, declined to comment on the author's behalf.

"She is on her book tour, actually, and that's the only thing she is talking about," Newberg wrote in an email.

White House officials declined to comment on Kennedy. Jay Carney, the press secretary, said he had "no personnel announcements to make" about ambassador appointments. Asked

to comment on Kennedy's qualifications to serve as ambassador to Japan,

tradition by presidents of appointing high-profile people to that post. Those

the former Senate majority leader; and Tom Foley, the former speaker of the House.

Kennedy would arrive in Japan as a kind of celebrity, part of one of America's most famous political families and someone close to the current American president. She would replace John Roos, the former head of a Silicon Valley law firm.

In Japan, the next ambassador will face a nation still working to recover from the tsunami and nuclear disaster that struck in 2011. The ambassador will also be on the front lines of the president's efforts to refocus American diplomacy on Asia.

The next envoy will arrive as the new leader in North Korea, Kim Jong Un, is making increasingly aggressive moves toward the United States and South Korea. □



Caroline Kennedy, the daughter of John F. Kennedy, in New York, Dec. 27, 2008. Caroline Kennedy is close to being announced as the next United States ambassador to Japan, and the assignment would vault her into the kind of public life that her father and uncles pursued for decades.

(Todd Heisler/The New York Times)

Carney declined. Sending Kennedy to Japan would continue a long

have included Walter F. Mondale, the former vice president; Mike Mansfield,

Scouts reject troop sponsored by gay rights group

BRADY McCOMBS

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The Boy Scouts of America have rejected an application for a scouting troop sponsored by a Utah gay rights organization.

The Utah Pride Center recently asked permission to start a troop for 10 middle-school aged children with straight troop leaders, said executive director Valerie Larabee. Many of the boys' parents had previously left Scouts or opted not to join because of their opposition to the Boy Scouts' long-

standing policy excluding gays and lesbians.

After spending four months preparing a proposal to adhere to Scouts' standards, Utah Pride Center officials said a local representative from the Boy Scouts' Great Salt Lake Council returned the entire application intact four days later.

They were told that the mission of their organization didn't properly align with the goals of Boy Scouts, said Charles Frost, Utah Pride Center director of community engagement. The Salt Lake City-based

group is an advocacy and service group for gays and lesbians.

The rejected proposal was first reported by The Salt Lake Tribune. The Boy Scouts national executive board is currently mulling a proposal to move away from its no-gays membership policy or create a local option that would give the decision to the individual troops. The board is expected to decide in May. Rick Barnes, executive of the Boy Scouts' Great Salt Lake Council, said it was a decision made by the

national organization. Boy Scouts of America spokesman Deron Smith said in an emailed statement that,

"Based on the mission of this organization, we do not believe a chartered partner relationship is beneficial to Scouting." In the Boy Scouts' Great Salt Lake Council — one of the largest in America with 5,500 troops and 73,400 youth — four out of five Scout leaders and parents that responded to a survey said they are opposed to lifting the ban on gays. Nearly half said they would quit

the Boy Scouts if the ban on gays is lifted, according to results of a survey of 4,700 adults. Nearly all of the troops in the Great Salt Lake Council are sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which teaches its members that marriage is only between a man and a woman and that same-sex relationships are sinful. In December, however, the LDS church launched a website encouraging members to be more compassionate in discussions about homosexuality. □

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In Miami, Cuban dissident blogger calls for unity

CHRISTINE ARMARIO

MIAMI (AP) — They came from all over to hear her speak. Old Cuban ladies with wrinkled faces and pristine makeup. Young students with iPhones and digital cameras. Men and women who fled Cuba decades ago and just last year, on makeshift rafts and planes.

When Cuban dissident and blogger Yoani Sanchez entered the room to speak Monday, dressed simply in white, they all stood up in applause and the politics that divide Cubans, even here in Miami, temporarily disappeared.

"In the Cuba that so many of us dream of, there is no need to clarify what type of Cuban you are," she said. "We'll be just Cubans. Cubans, period."

The crowd of several hundred stood on their feet, chanted "Freedom!" and applauded.

Sanchez, a Cuban mother and wife who turned to blogging just five years ago, has gained a following and accolades worldwide for her candid descriptions of modern life in Cuba on her blog Generation Y. In 2009, she was named one of the "100 Most Influential People in the World" by Time magazine. She is currently on an international tour that has taken her to three continents after being allowed to leave Cuba for the first time in nearly a decade. She went to Brazil, where boisterous protesters backing the Cuban government called her a "mercenary" financed by the CIA and even tugged at her hair. She incited controversy when, in an ironic tone, she suggested the U.S. should let five Cuban men convicted in 2001 of attempting to infiltrate mili-

tary installations in South Florida free because of all the money Cuba could save and spend on more important matters than campaigning for their release.

She has met with young Cuban-Americans born in the U.S. with dreams of a homeland they have known only in photographs and stories. And she has shaken hands with some of the most powerful politicians in Washington, while calling on the U.S. to end its longstanding embargo against the communist island.

But the most anticipated stop of her 80-day tour has been Miami, the heart of the exile community.

When she arrived last Thursday, one of Sanchez's first stops was to La Ermita de la Caridad, a shrine to our Lady of Charity of El Cobre, Cuba's patron saint. She walked along a stretch of Miami's shoreline she called the city's "Malecon," a reference to Havana's coastal boulevard. After spending the weekend catching up with her sister, brother-in-law and niece, Sanchez made her first public appearance. The site was aptly chosen: Miami's Freedom Tower, a golden yellow Mediterranean style building where thousands of Cubans fleeing the 1959 communist revolution were processed, given food and connected with social services. A line of men and women who did not have tickets but hoped to still get in stretched down the block. Among them were sisters Magaly Consuegra, 65, and Maria Santa Cruz, 74. "This is a historical building for us," said Consuegra, who remembered standing in a line in that same spot, when she first arrived

five decades ago. "I admire her so much because she had the courage that so many Cubans don't have." Consuegra came

when she was 15 and sometimes, she regrets that she did not stay or go back, like Sanchez has vowed to do. There are an estimated



Blogger and activist Yoani Sanchez, of Cuba, right, adjusts her hair after receiving a medal from Miami Dade College president Eduardo Padron, left, after speaking at the Freedom Tower of Miami Dade College, Monday, April 1, 2013, in Miami. Sanchez has gained thousands of followers worldwide for her candid descriptions of modern life in Cuba on her blog Generation Y.

(AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

1 million Cubans in exile in the U.S., most in Miami, almost one-tenth the size of the island's population.

Enormous box trucks drove by repeatedly, the words, "Welcome Yoani Sanchez" stretching along the side. Others held signs calling for Raul Castro to step down as president and for the years of communist rule to end. Just one small group of about a dozen exiles held a protest, demonstrating against Sanchez's position against the embargo and her comments on the Cuban spies. But they dispersed before the event began as a few rain clouds rolled in.

Sanchez told the story of leaving Berlin on a train the first time she left Cuba years ago. □

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Cyprus gains more time to achieve needed surplus

MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS

Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) —

Cyprus has been granted an extra year — until 2017 — to achieve a targeted budget surplus of 4 percent as part of bailout negotiations with international lenders, the government spokesman said Monday. The change is designed to prepare for what could be a deeper than expected economic slowdown as the Mediterranean country is forced to drastically shrink its banking and financial industry. Under a preliminary agreement with Cyprus' euro area partners and the International Monetary Fund for billions in rescue money, Cyprus had until 2016 to generate the budget surplus target through spending cuts and tax hikes.

But that deal was based on an earlier forecast that the economy would shrink this year by 3.5 percent of gross domestic product.

A Cyprus government official who spoke on condition of anonymity because

he's not authorized to discuss details of the negotiations said the economy is now projected to contract by some 9 percent of GDP. For that reason, government spokesman Christos Stylianides said Monday that negotiators are now hoping to extend the deadline to achieve a 4 percent budget surplus even further, to 2018.

Cyprus agreed last week to make bank depositors with accounts over 100,000 euros (\$129,000) contribute to the financial rescue in order to secure 10 billion euros (\$12.9 billion) in loans. Cyprus needed to raise 6 billion euros (\$7.4 billion) on its own in order to clinch the larger package, and banks remained shut for nearly two weeks until politicians hammered out a deal. To prevent mass withdrawals when the banks reopened on March 28, Cypriot authorities imposed a raft of restrictions, including daily withdrawal limits of 300 euros (\$384) for individuals and 5,000 euros (\$6,426) for businesses. That amounted



Cyprus' President Nicos Anastasiades, left, and Orthodox Christian church Archbishop Chrysostomos II are seen during a wreath-laying ceremony for fighters killed in capital Nicosia on Monday April 1, 2013.

(AP Photo/Petros Karadjias)

to the first so-called capital controls that any country has applied in the eurozone's 14-year history.

Under the terms of the bailout deal, the country's second largest bank, Laiki, is to be split up, with its non-performing loans and toxic assets going into a "bad

bank." The healthy side will be absorbed into the Bank of Cyprus.

Big Laiki depositors could lose as much as 80 percent of their money.

Bank of Cyprus savers will lose 37.5 percent and possibly 22.5 percent more, depending on what experts

determine over the next 90 days is needed to prop up that bank's reserves. The remaining 40 percent of big deposits at the Bank of Cyprus will be "temporarily frozen for liquidity reasons," but continue to accrue existing levels of interest plus another 10 percent. □

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Second Course

- SOUP OF THE DAY home made

Third Course

- STEAK DIANE with sauteed mushrooms tomatoes and herbs
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- PLAIN OR STUFFED GROUPER stuffed with seafood thermidor

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Dutch hold 4, search for sarin nerve agent

THE HAGUE, Netherlands

(AP) — Dutch police spent three days digging up a field after receiving a tip that sarin may have been buried there, but they found no trace of the deadly nerve agent, a prosecutor's office spokeswoman said Monday.

Two men and two women have been arrested in the case in the southern city of Maastricht on suspicion of owning and concealing a deadly gas, spokeswoman Cindy Reijnders said in a telephone interview.

She said police started monitoring a man's movements last week after a tip and arrested him Friday as he was about to start digging in a field just outside Maastricht, a city close to the Dutch border with Belgium.

Reijnders said police have no indication that any sarin was about to be used in a terror attack.

"There are no legal activities you can use sarin for," she said. "But at this moment we have no information or clues that it was going to be used for terrorism." Reijnders said police believe the four suspects may have been trying to sell the nerve agent for their own financial gain, although it remained unclear if they already had a buyer lined up.

Sarin, first created by German scientists just before World War II, is a powerful nerve agent that was used in an attack by the Japanese doomsday cult Aum Shinrikyo on the Tokyo subway system in 1995 that killed 13 people and sickened around 6,000.

One suspect was arrested Friday as he was about to start digging in a field near Maastricht. Police dug up 400 square meters (4,300 sq. feet) in the area to a depth of a meter (yard)

without finding anything. Three of the suspects, whose ages range from 21 to 52 years, are Dutch citizens and one has Dutch-Turkish joint citizenship. Their names were not released.

They are due to appear before an investigating judge Tuesday at a private sitting where prosecutors will ask for their continued detention while investigations continue, Reijnders said.

According to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, sarin is a highly toxic and fast-acting organo-phosphorous compound that can be absorbed through the skin or by breathing it in.

Exposure to a high dose of sarin can cause convulsions and loss of consciousness. Death can be caused by suffocation because of muscular paralysis and the effects the sarin has on the respiratory center of the nervous system. □

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US blasts arrest warrant against Egypt satirist

SARAH EL DEEB
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The U.S. State Department said Monday that arrest warrants and the investigation of a popular Egyptian satirist and other critics of Egypt's Islamist president highlight a "disturbing trend" of growing restrictions on freedom of expression in the country.

The strongly worded statement by U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland Monday came a day after Bassem Youssef, who criticizes President Mohammed Morsi and hard-line clerics on his Jon Stewart-style show, was released on bail following an interrogation into accusations he insulted Morsi and Islam. Youssef is the most prominent critic of Morsi to be called in for questioning in recent weeks, in what the opposition says is a campaign to intimidate critics amid wave after wave of political unrest in the deeply polarized country. Prosecutors deny launching a political crackdown, saying they are only implementing the law.

Youssef's questioning followed arrest warrants against five prominent anti-government activists accused of inciting violence. Nuland said the administration is also concerned that the Egyptian government has "been slow" or didn't "adequately" investigate cases of attacks against anti-Morsi protesters, journalists and police brutality. "So there does not seem to be an even handed application of justice here," she said. A spokesman for



A bodyguard secures popular Egyptian television satirist Bassem Youssef, who has come to be known as Egypt's Jon Stewart, as he enters Egypt's state prosecutors office to face accusations of insulting Islam and the country's Islamist leader in Cairo, Egypt, Sunday, March 31, 2013. Government opponents said the warrant against such a high profile figure, known for lampooning President Mohammed Morsi and the new Islamist political class, was an escalation in a campaign to intimidate critics. (AP Photo/Amr Nabil)

the Egyptian presidency had no immediate comment on the statement.

The arrest warrants, Nuland added, show "evidence of a disturbing trend of growing restrictions on the freedom of expression."

On Monday, Egypt's top prosecutor forwarded a new complaint against the chief executive officer of the private TV station that airs Youssef's program to the country's state security prosecutor for investigation. The complaint accuses him and the satirist of helping spread sedition and disturbing the peace by airing the political satire program, a judicial official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media. □

UN set to vote on treaty regulating arms trade

EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. General Assembly is expected to vote Tuesday on what would be the first U.N. treaty regulating the multibillion-dollar international arms trade after Iran, North Korea and Syria blocked its adoption by consensus.

Assembly spokesman Nikola Jovanovic told The Associated Press on Monday that the resolution to adopt the treaty requires support from a majority of the 193 U.N. member states. Since the treaty had strong support when it was brought before U.N. members last Thursday, its approval is virtually certain — unless there are attempts to amend it before the vote.

Many countries, including the United States, control arms exports. But there has never been an international treaty regulating the estimated \$60 billion global arms trade. For more than a decade, activists and some governments have been pushing for international rules to try to keep illicit weapons out of the hands of terrorists, insurgent fighters and organized crime.

Hopes of reaching agreement at a U.N. negotiating conference were dashed in July when the U.S. said it needed more time to consider the proposed accord — a move quickly backed by Russia and China. In December, the U.N. General Assembly decided to hold a final negotiating confer-

ence to agree on a treaty and set last Thursday as the deadline.

After two weeks of intensive negotiations, there was growing optimism as the deadline approached that all 193 member states would approve the final draft treaty by consensus — a requirement set by the United States.

This time, the U.S. was prepared to support the final draft treaty. But Iran, North Korea and Syria objected. Iran said the treaty had many "loopholes," is "hugely susceptible to politicization and discrimination," and ignores the "legitimate demand" to prohibit the transfer of arms to those who commit aggression.

Syria cited seven objec-

tions, including the treaty's failure to include an embargo on delivering weapons "to terrorist armed groups and to non-state actors." And North Korea said the treaty favors arms exporters who can restrict arms to importers that have a right to legitimate self-defense and the arms trade.

Both Iran and North Korea are under U.N. arms embargoes over their nuclear programs, while Syria is in the third year of a conflict that has escalated to civil war and is under U.S. and European Union sanctions. Amnesty International said all three countries "have abysmal human rights records — having even used arms against their own citizens." □

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Hamas re-elects pragmatist Mashaal as its leader

KARIN LAUB

SARAH EL DEEB

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The Islamic militant group Hamas on Monday re-elected longtime leader Khaled Mashaal, officials said, choosing a relative prag-

matist who has sparred with movement hardliners in the past over his attempt to reconcile with Western-backed Palestinian rivals. The secretive Hamas did not issue an announcement, but Mashaal's re-election was confirmed

by two Hamas officials. The vote late Monday capped a year of internal elections spread over several countries and shrouded in mystery. The Qatar-based Mashaal, 56, has led Hamas since 1996 and won another four-year

term. He ran unopposed and won the support of a majority in Hamas' Shura Council which has about 60 members, said the two Hamas officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not permitted to discuss the secret election with reporters. Mashaal enjoys the backing of regional powers Turkey, Egypt and Qatar, countries where Hamas' parent movement, the region-wide Muslim Brotherhood, is influential.

It's not clear if his re-election will give him enough clout to pursue reconciliation or if hardliners, particularly those based in the Gaza Strip, will be able to veto a deal.

Hamas wrested Gaza from Mahmoud Abbas, the internationally backed Palestinian president, in 2007, leaving him with only parts of the West Bank. Since then, the rivals have established separate governments that have become

increasingly entrenched in their respective territories. Last year, Mashaal and Abbas, who have cordial relations, reached a deal whereby Abbas would head an interim government of technocrats in the West Bank and Gaza. This government would have paved the way for general elections.

However, the deal never got off the ground because of opposition from Hamas leaders in Gaza and senior figures in Abbas' Fatah movement. Hamas leaders in Gaza were particularly vehement in their objections, apparently fearing that a unity deal would give Abbas a new foothold in Gaza and weaken Hamas' grip on the territory.

Last week, the emir of Qatar proposed holding a reconciliation conference in Egypt in coming weeks to set up a timetable for forming the interim government and holding elections. □



Khaled Mashaal, Hamas leader, center, attends his father's funeral at a Mosque in Amman, Jordan. (AP Photo/Nader Daoud)

6,000 Syrians killed in March, deadliest month yet

BEN HUBBARD

Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — March was the bloodiest month yet in Syria's 2-year-old conflict with more than 6,000 documented deaths, a leading anti-regime activist group said Monday, blaming the increase on heavier shelling and more violent clashes.

Rami Abdul-Rahman, who heads the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said the increased toll is likely incomplete because both the Syrian army and the rebel groups fighting the government often under-

report their dead in the civil war.

"Both sides are hiding information," Abdul-Rahman said by phone from Britain, where his group is based. "It is very difficult to get correct info on the fighters because they don't want the information to hurt morale."

The numbers, while provided by only one group, support the appraisal of the conflict offered by many Syria watchers: The civil war is largely a military stalemate that is destroying the country's social fabric and taking a huge

toll on civilians. The increase also reflects the continuing spread of major hostilities to new parts of Syria.

While clashes continue in Aleppo, Damascus and Homs, Syria's three largest cities, rebels have launched an offensive in recent weeks to seize towns and army bases in the southern province of Daraa, largely with the help of an influx of foreign-funded weapons.

The Observatory, which works through a network of contacts in Syria, said those killed in March in-

cluded similar numbers of combatants on both sides: 1,486 rebels and army defectors and 1,464 soldiers from the Syrian army.

But the number of civilians killed exceeded them both: 2,080 total for the month, including 298 children and 291 women.

In addition, there were 387 unidentified civilians and 588 unidentified fighters, most of them foreigners fighting with the rebels, bringing the March total to 6,005, Abdul-Rahman said. He criticized the international community for not doing more to stop the

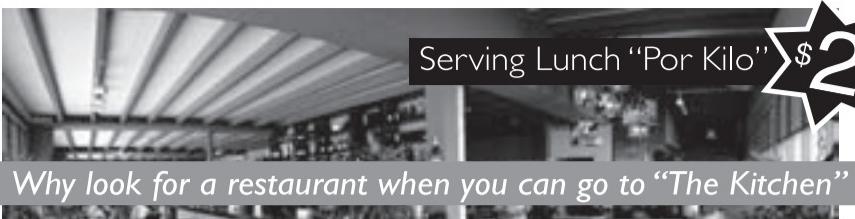
bloodshed, which he said could increase.

"If there is no solution, we think the numbers will get worse in the coming months," he said.

The March toll surpassed what had previously been the deadliest month, August 2012, when airstrikes, clashes and shelling killed more than 5,400 people, Abdul-Rahman said.

His total death toll for the conflict through the end of March was 62,554, a number he acknowledged as incomplete, suggesting the true figure could be twice as high. □

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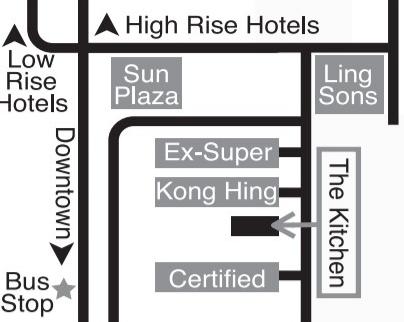


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Muslims worry about broader France headscarf ban

JAMEY KEATEN

Associated Press

LE BOURGET, France (AP) —

Because of her choice to wear a headscarf, Samia Kaddour, a Muslim, has all but abandoned trying to land a government job in France. Soon, some private sector jobs could be off limits, too.

French President Francois Hollande says he wants a new law that could extend restrictions on the wearing of prominent religious symbols in state jobs into the private sector. His new tack comes after a top French court ruled in March that a day care operator that gets some state funding unfairly fired a woman in a headscarf, sparking a political backlash.

As Christians celebrated Easter on Sunday, Kaddour attended the four-day Annual Meeting of Muslims of France in Le Bourget, north of Paris. The convention, which last year drew some 160,000 faithful and was expected to grow this year, is billed as the largest annual gathering of its kind in Europe. It is in its 30th year and ended Monday.

French law bars state employees from wearing prominent religious symbols such as Muslim headscarves, Jewish skullcaps or large Christian crosses in public schools, welfare offices or other government facilities. Two years ago, France banned Muslim veils

that cover faces, such as the niqab, which has a slit for the eyes, or the mesh-screen burqa, from being worn anywhere in public. Meeting leaders say France has made progress in accepting Muslims and noted that, unlike 30 years ago, women wearing

Kaddour, 26, who is a community activist from the English Channel port city of Le Havre and one of 10 children of Algerian-born parents who moved to France for plentiful jobs during its economic boom times decades ago. "Islam is always brandished when-

Cassation ruled in March that Baby Loup, a private-sector day care operator that gets some state funding, unfairly fired a woman who wore a headscarf to work. The far-right railed at the decision, and even Interior Minister Manuel Valls expressed regret over it.

Wading into the debate in a prime-time TV interview on Thursday, Hollande suggested new limits are needed on Muslim headscarves, saying that "when there is contact with children, in what we call public service of early childhood ... there should be a certain similarity to what exists in (public) school."

"I think the law should get involved," he added.

Many Muslims fear an encroaching Islamophobia, while proponents of such measures insist they counter extremism and act as a rampart to protect France's identity against inequality. France, with an estimated 5 million-6 million Muslims whose families mostly have origins in former French col-

onies in north Africa, is at the forefront of addressing the challenges that many European countries are facing about how to integrate their sizeable ethnic and religious minorities on a continent where white Christians have dominated the political landscape for centuries.

Bristling against stereotypes in many corners of the West that Muslims are closet radicals or even terrorists, leaders of the convention in Le Bourget preached peace and justice. And after prayers and praise of Islam's Prophet Muhammad, convention leaders led a song in Arabic in a vast meeting hall with thousands in the audience — and some up on the dais waved French flags.

In another convention hall, vendors offered items such as headscarves, sweet pastries or T-shirts emblazoned with the saying 'Don't Panic, I'm Muslim,' while mothers pushing strollers and others wandered through the crowd. □



Visitors stroll at the 30th Annual Meeting of France's Muslims, at Le Bourget, Europe's largest and most popular Muslim convention, Friday March 29, 2013, on the fringes of the Parisian suburb of Le Bourget.

(AP Photo/Remy de la Mauviniere)

headscarves today rarely draw suspicion, scowls or curiosity. Still, many Muslims — and even some Roman Catholics and Jews — fear France's insistence on secular values first enshrined in the French Revolution more than two centuries ago is unfairly crimping their ability to express their religious beliefs freely.

They also worry that Hollande's Socialist government, like a conservative one before it, wants to score political points.

"Islam has become a political instrument," said

ever there is internal political discord."

Most mainstream politicians insist Islam is not being targeted. But a backlash erupted after the Court of

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Caribbean nations search for oil amid spill fears

DAVID McFADDEN

Associated Press

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP)

The turquoise waters that have long brought treasure seekers to the Caribbean now are drawing a new kind of explorer as countries across the region increasingly open their seas to oil exploration.

From the Bahamas and Cuba down to Aruba and Suriname, international oil companies are lining up to locate potentially rich offshore deposits in the Caribbean. The countries hope drilling could lead to a black-gold bonanza, easing demand for imported oil and diversifying their economies.

It's a longstanding dream for many. As the Dominican songwriter Juan Luis Guerra once sang, "If petroleum sprang from here, oh but there would be light and hope."

So far, the twin-island nation of Trinidad & Tobago is the only major hydrocarbons producer in the Caribbean, and its waters are crowded with offshore platforms. The country sits just about seven miles (11 kilometers) off the coast of Venezuela, which has the world's largest proven oil reserves. It's pushing hard into deep-water drilling and has signed production-sharing contracts with British oil company BP for new exploration blocks.

A growing number of other

Caribbean nations are also authorizing or at least aggressively pursuing offshore exploration.

The Bahamas recently announced it would try offshore exploratory drilling and said it should have enough information by late 2014 to decide whether it can move forward with

ing well exploration in their seas, while the Anglo-Dutch group Shell announced in December it was preparing to sink its third offshore well in nearby French Guiana, an overseas French department, with other companies also exploring in deep waters there.

"What once was a trickle



The refinery of the state-owned Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd., PETROTRIN, is shown in Pointe-a-Pierre, on the Gulf of Paria, Trinidad & Tobago. From the Bahamas and Cuba down to Aruba and Suriname, international oil companies are lining up to locate potentially rich offshore deposits in the Caribbean. The countries hope drilling could lead to a black-gold bonanza, easing demand for imported oil and diversifying their economies.

(AP Photo/Shirley Bahadur)

production. A voter referendum would first have to decide the matter. Bahamas Petroleum Company CEO Simon Potter said a rig will drill to subsea depths of roughly 22,000 feet (6,705 meters) in some 1,600 feet (488 meters) of water adjacent to Cuba's offshore territory. Barbados and Jamaica have also been seek-

ing well becoming a stream in the Caribbean, with new announcements of expanding deep-water exploration lease offerings and drilling permits being issued," said Lee Hunt, a Houston-based consultant who retired last year as the longtime president of the International Association of Drilling Contractors.

The push for exploration has been fed partly by worries that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's nearly two-year-long cancer fight and March 5 death would affect a Venezuelan aid program called PetroCaribe that sells petroleum to 17 Caribbean countries on preferential terms.

PetroCaribe provided \$14 billion worth of Venezuelan oil to the region last year, with Cuba being the principal beneficiary. Chavez's successor Nicolas Maduro hasn't said he would stop the aid, but his challenger in April 14 elections, Gov. Henrique Capriles, has pledged to cut off subsidized oil to Cuba and re-evaluate the PetroCaribe program if elected.

Keeping the oil flowing is crucial. Caribbean countries generate nearly all their power from imported oil although the region is blessed with solar, wind and other alternative energy opportunities.

Nonetheless, many people across the region fear their famed clear water, fringing reefs and white-sand beaches could end up a casualty to any future oil boom, threatening the tourism bonanza that many countries already depend on. Even with the possibility of a windfall still distant, regional officials have begun to discuss how they would cooperate in the event of a major accident, such as

the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

"First, we have to prevent any kind of spill. And second, if something happens, we have to make sure everyone is working together," said Ernesto Soberon Guzman, the Cuban ambassador to the Bahamas, during regional talks about oil spill preparedness in the Bahamaian capital of Nassau this month.

Ocean currents practically assure that a big spill in one Caribbean nation would significantly affect neighbors, possibly even the U.S. East Coast. Many Gulf communities are still recovering from the Deepwater Horizon accident, the country's largest offshore oil spill.

"If oil rises to the surface and gets to the surface currents, it would start flowing towards our waters and our shores," said Capt. John Slaughter, chief of planning, readiness, and response for the U.S. Coast Guard's Miami-based 7th District. "We're going to take every action we can to prevent that from happening."

Adding to complications, the overall Caribbean region, with the exception of Trinidad & Tobago, is still an uncertain frontier for offshore oil and gas, said Jorge R. Pinon, a Latin America and Caribbean energy expert at the University of Texas in Austin. □

Tourists kidnapped, 1 sexually assaulted in Rio de Janeiro

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Two foreign tourists were held for hours, brutalized and one of them sexually assaulted aboard a public transport van they boarded in Rio de Janeiro's showcase Copacabana beach neighborhood, police said in a statement.

Two men aged 20 and 22 have been taken into custody and a third is being sought in connection with the incident, which saw the two foreigners held for around six hours starting shortly after midnight on Saturday, police said.

The statement said the suspects forced other passen-

gers to get out of the van and then sexually assaulted the female tourist inside the vehicle, which was one of a fleet of vans that serve bus routes and seat about a dozen people. During the alleged assault, the tourists were driven to the poor suburban neighborhood of Sao Goncalo, where the two suspects were apprehended, the statement said. The victims' nationalities have not been released, but local media reports have said the woman is American. Reports said the two had been studying Portuguese in Rio for about a month and that

both left the country following the incident. The statement said one of the victims' cellphone was found in the suspects' possession. The suspects had also used a debit card belonging to one of the victims at two gas stations, the statement said. The Globo television network broadcast surveillance camera images of two men filling up the white van and showed police images of a metal bar the suspects are thought to have used to beat and intimidate the victims. The victims positively identified the two suspects, and a Brazilian woman has said she'd

also been assaulted by the pair on March 23, the statement said.

In an interview with Globo television, commanding officer Alexandre Braga, who heads the Rio police unit specializing in crimes against tourists, said the suspects had gone on a sex crime spree.

"The characteristics of both crimes, both the Brazilian case and the one with the foreigners, lead us to believe that they (the suspects) wanted to have a 'party of evil,' in quotes," Braga said. "The principal motive appears to have been the satisfaction of

their lust."

He added that the robbery and other crimes appear to have been "secondary." Multiple calls to police seeking further detail Monday have not been returned.

The incident raises new questions about security in Rio, which has cracked down on once-endemic drug violence in preparation for hosting next year's soccer World Cup and the 2016 summer Olympic games. The city will also be playing host to World Youth Day, a Roman Catholic pilgrimage expected to draw some 2 million people in late July. □

LOCAL Aruba TODAY

Wine, Women & Fashion: Ladies Night, and the boys can join!



PALM BEACH - Palm Beach Plaza Mall is announcing Wine, Women & Fashion. It's a new, unique and fun event especially for women, where the ladies come and meet each other and have a delightful time, enjoying a movie, shopping, dining, fashion shows and prizes.

The VIP Movie will start off with a Welcome Drink at the Caribbean Cinemas located at Palm Beach Plaza Mall. Here is where you'll find different stands with different merchandises on special price. With your purchase you will receive a raffle ticket. At the theatre room entrance you'll receive a cupcake and popcorn. All the participants will receive a GOODY BAG which will consist of different gifts, special discounts, and VIP Card. The raffle



winner will be announced before the movie starts. After the movie you can go

to the VIP area located on the second floor, there will be a private bar and a

perfect view for the Fashion Shows. There will be a total of 4

Fashion Shows of the latest trends available at the store(s) located in Palm Beach Plaza Mall, starting from 6PM to 9.30PM

Wine Women & Fashion is a monthly event, once per month. With your participation in the VIP Movie you will receive a VIP Movie Card. The Gentlemen can also enjoy the Wine, Women & Fashion. Palm Beach Plaza has created a guys corner located on the 3rd floor. You can shoot some pool, watch a game which will be transmitted through a projector screen, and of course special price on Beer!

The first Wine, Women & Fashion is on the 6th of April 2013, starting from 5PM to 10PM

Shops are open from 10AM-10PM; Kids day care: Palm Beach Dream Bowl. □

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Sea turtle season on Aruba has officially started!

EAGLE BEACH – Recently, the first Leatherback Sea Turtle of this nesting season 2013 came ashore in front of La Quinta Beach Resort. By now she has come back to make a second nest. Turtugaruba (the local Foundation for the protection of the sea turtles) placed the red-and-white barriers around the nest to prevent irresponsible drivers from crushing the eggs and to guarantee a safe incubation period of two months.

The Leatherback Sea Turtles nesting on Aruba don't live in the Caribbean, but in the Northern part of the Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Nova Scotia, Canada. But they are born on Aru-

ba's beaches. After 20 – 30 years they reach maturity and then return to their natal beach in order to nest during the turtle nesting season (March – July). Normally one female makes about 7 nests per season. After laying her last nest the female returns to the cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean. She will not come back to Aruba the next year, but will skip one or two years.

All species of sea turtles are endangered and need our protection.

What you can do to protect sea turtles:

Lights out for sea turtles. Nighttime activities and artificial lighting may deter adult females from nesting.



So please keep all lights off, including flashlights, flash photography and video equipment. "Sea turtles dig the dark"

Do not drive on beaches. Not all of the turtle nests on all the beaches around

beach furniture or recreational equipment may cause nesting females to abort their nesting attempt or may even trap them. So don't leave any beach chairs at night unattended close to the sea, but make a stack as far as possible away from the water.

Do not disturb a nesting sea turtle. Do not attempt to touch the turtle but stay at a respectful distance (at least 10 meters). Do allow the turtle to complete the full nesting process (about two hours) and don't be in her way when she returns to the sea.

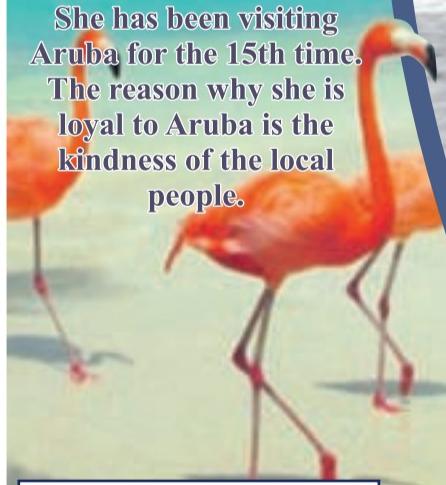
Do call Turtugaruba (24 hour Turtle Hotline: 592-9393). If, during a late evening or early morning stroll on the beach you witness a sea turtle or if you see turtle crawl marks, please call Turtugaruba or notify the front desk of your hotel. Thanks! □



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Book Signing Event featuring Author Dr. Fran White, Ph.D.

On April 6, 2013 the Aruba Airport Bookstore (Aruba Airport Gate 6 upstairs) will host Author Dr. Fran White, Ph.D. for a live and exciting book signing event from 11am to 3pm! White, a resident of Easton, MD, will be available to sign copies of her book, Family Secrets. Liner Notes from the featured work, Family Secrets: "This tells me nothing! Is this all you can do? Show me a picture of my mother without any clear explanation of her racial heritage! Do you realize how hurt and traumatized I was to be attacked for something that I knew nothing about! Someone that I may not be! A situation that I do not know about or have been

given the facts about from my family in England! What am I? Who am I? Why are there so many family secrets?"

What should have been an enjoyable evening between husband and wife turns into a painful trip down memory lane. Prompted by the powerful theme of South Pacific, Brandy Grey confronts her past of abandonment and lies and determines to close the chapter that has been haunting her, her entire life—the carefully hidden secret of her heritage. Follow author Dr. Fran White through the mysteries, drama, and tears in her search for Family Secrets: A Journey of Good and Evil. □

Amazonia Churrascaria looking forward to busy season!



PALM BEACH — With the conclusion of Lent, beef returns to take a position of honor, on the family menu, and Amazonia Churrascaria expects to be immensely popular over the coming weeks with locals and visitors making the pilgrimage in order to sample 16 types of perfectly grilled meats and 50 fresh salad bar items. The restaurant, now under the direction of Jennifer Phillip, the new general manager enjoys a vibrant and dynamic buzz with Jennifer adding her personal touch to the high standards of service and cuisine delivered by Aruba's original Rodizio style Brazilian steakhouse.

Jennifer, a native of Aruba received her associate degree at the Universidad di Aruba's School of Hospitality. At the end of her studies here, she was selected to work for Disney World in Orlando, where her career took off. At the end of a much-enjoyed Disney experience Jennifer went on to complete her Bachelors degree at NAU, Northern Arizona University whose School of Hotel and Restaurant Management is one of the best in the country. Upon graduation she further honed her skills with the Marriott hotel chain working for

two exciting properties in the US and in London, which further enhanced her knowledge and expertise. When she returned to her native island of Aruba, she stepped off the plane as a fully developed hospitality executive.

On Aruba, Jennifer entered the restaurant world working for two upscale and exclusive dining establishments then she was recruited by Amazonia Churrascaria as the new general manager just recently.

Enthusiastic about the career opportunity, Jennifer now takes pride in serving guests and appreciates the loyalty of Aruba's repeat visitors. She is totally committed to making the dinner experience at Amazonia Churrascaria as exciting and entertaining as possible, relying on the collaboration of a multi-national staff of thirty five, carvers, servers, cooks and cleaners.

Dinner at Amazonia Churrascaria, she says, will continue to always star on the short list of must-visit favorites on the island, and we're looking forward to a busy season.

Pictured here Jennifer and sous-chef Pedro, mid dining room at Amazonia Churrascaria. □

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CASINO AND SHOPS

Westin Resort & Casino continues Earth Hour tradition

PALM BEACH - The Westin Resort & Casino, Aruba turned off its lights recently in observance of Earth Hour, a worldwide event organized by the World Wildlife Fund to send a powerful global message about environmental awareness and caring for the planet. To underscore parent Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc.'s dedication to environmental sustainability, Westin Resort & Casino, Aruba shared other energy-saving measures during the recent Earth Hour at 8:30pm. Among them: turning off exterior signage lighting; dimming or turning off non-essential interior lighting; and using candlelight in appropriate public areas such as restaurants and bars.

Guests enjoyed extra Earth Hour activities, including roasting marshmallows fireside and Stargazing with the resort's telescopes. Earth Hour has become an annual tradition at the Westin Resort & Casino, Aruba. □



Catch your own dinner with Driftwood! Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: "from the pier to your plate!"



ORANJESTAD - The downtown marina is home of Driftwood Fishing Charters, the successful fisherman of the established seafood restaurant Driftwood in Oranjestad. Driftwood owner Herby

Merryweater has a love and passion for fishing. A fisherman who knows about fish, what our local waters have to offer, and what the words :fresh seafood" really mean. What Herby catches will be served in his restaurant on the same day. Herby loves to share his fishing passion with the many visitors to the island. His fleet of a 35ft. Twin Engine Bertram yacht and a 50ft. Twin Engine Post yacht, appropriately called "Driftwood I and II, is available for charters on 12 noon and from 1pm to 5pm.



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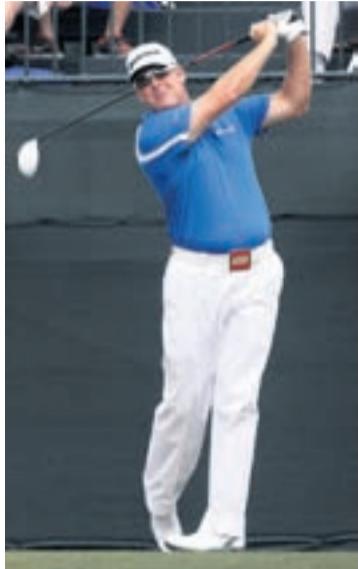
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Driftwood Restaurant. This authentic Aruban seafood restaurant is located in characteristic downtown Oranjestad. Their

extended menu has been jibed by many. Driftwood offers daily specials, as well as a delicious 4-course menu for just \$25.95. **Charter deep sea fishing rates:** \$400 - 1/2 day • \$760 - full day. Rates per boat Max. 6 people. **Driftwood Restaurant** Authentic Aruban Seafood Restaurant; Klipstraat #12, Downtown Oranjestad. Tel: (297) 583 2515 www.driftwoodaruba.com Open hours: every day, from 5pm till 10:30pm. Sunday Closed.

SPORTS**Aruba TODAY**

D.A. Points tees off on the first hole during the final round of the Shell Houston Open golf tournament on Sunday, March 31, 2013, in Humble, Texas.

Associated Press

Stenson plays his way into the Masters

DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

HUMBLE, Texas (AP) — One way or another Henrik Stenson knew he was going to the Masters.

Stenson, who eight months ago was No. 133 in the world, closed with a 6-under 66 on Sunday in the Houston Open and was the leader in the clubhouse when the final round was delayed because of thunderstorms.

In the end he didn't get the tournament victory, as D.A. Points returned after the rain and closed out a one-stroke win. But he did get a major reward.

The Swede needed to finish at least in 13th place in Houston to break into the top 50 of the world rankings — which brings an automatic invitation to the Masters. Stenson didn't feel comfortable until he blistered his tee shot on the 18th hole and hit his approach into about 10 feet for birdie.

Continued on Page 19

DARNED SOX



Revamped Red Sox crush injury-depleted Yankees

Boston Red Sox left fielder Jackie Bradley Jr. pulls in a deep fly out by New York Yankees' Robinson Cano during the third inning of an opening day baseball game, Monday, April 1, 2013, in New York.

Associated Press
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NHL Capsules

Fedotenko lifts Flyers over Capitals in OT

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Ruslan Fedotenko scored 1:34 into overtime after Kimmo Timonen got the tying goal with 9.5 seconds left in regulation and the Philadelphia Flyers beat the Washington Capitals 5-4 on Sunday night.

Maxime Talbot, Matt Read and Claude Giroux also scored for the Flyers, who moved within two points of the idle New York Rangers and New York Islanders for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

The Capitals are a point ahead of Philadelphia in a jumbled East.

Desperate to get a point, the Flyers tied it at 4 when Timonen ripped a slap shot past Braden Holtby after several chances in front. Timonen then set up Fedotenko with a perfect crossing pass in OT to cap off a remarkable comeback and set off a wild celebration.

Marcus Johansson and Alex Ovechkin scored power-play goals 26 seconds apart in the third period to give the Capitals a 4-2 lead.

BLACKHAWKS 7, RED WINGS 1

DETROIT (AP) — Brandon Saad had two goals and an assist and Dave Bolland scored twice in the Chicago Blackhawks' win over the Detroit Red Wings.

Jonathan Toews added a goal and two assists and Jeremy Morin and Nick Leddy, also scored for



Philadelphia Flyers' Ruslan Fedotenko, far left, scores the winning goal past Washington Capital goalie Braden Holtby, right, as Alex Ovechkin, center, watches in overtime of an NHL hockey game, Sunday, March 31, 2013, in Philadelphia. The Flyers won 5-4.

Associated Press

Chicago. Cory Crawford made 33 saves.

Cory Emmerton scored Detroit's goal. Jimmy Howard was pulled in favor of Jonas Gustavsson early in the second period.

Gustavsson made nine saves.

Chicago led 3-0 at the end of the first period after scoring on its first three shots in a 1:39 span in the game's first 4½ minutes.

BLUE JACKETS 2, DUCKS 1, OT

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Mark Letestu set up the only goal in regulation and scored the game-winner in

overtime, and Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 29 of 30 shots to lead the Columbus Blue Jackets over the Anaheim Ducks.

The victory improved the Blue Jackets to 9-0-3 in their last 12 games at Nationwide Arena and gave them points in 15 of their last 17 games (10-2-5) to crawl into playoff contention in the West.

Emerson Etem had the only goal for the Pacific Division-leading Ducks, who had lost four in a row until winning 2-1 in Chicago on Friday night.

KINGS 3, STARS 2

DALLAS (AP) — Brad Richardson and Justin Williams scored third-period goals just over a minute apart to help lift the Los Angeles Kings past the Dallas Stars. Jeff Carter also scored his 20th goal of the season for Los Angeles, which has lost just once in regulation in Dallas in its last 14 visits (11-1-2) and outshot the Stars 40-15.

Richardson's goal was particularly impressive, since the fourth-liner was playing his first game since Feb. 10 and third of the season overall after sitting out as a healthy scratch the other

32 contests. Jonathan Bernier needed to make just 15 saves for the Kings, and remained unbeaten — 8-0-0 in his starts this season.

Jamie Benn and Ray Whitney scored for Dallas, which had won both previous meetings between the Pacific Division rivals this season by a combined score of 7-2.

BRUINS 2, SABRES 0

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — David Krejci and Nathan Horton scored goals less than three minutes apart in the third period, and Anton Khudobin stopped 26 shots in leading the Boston Bruins over the Buffalo Sabres.

Krejci broke open a scoreless game during a scramble in front with 7:06 remaining, and after Horton was stopped twice from in close by Buffalo goalie Ryan Miller.

Krejci then returned the favor by setting up Horton for a tap-in in front with 4:16 left in helping Boston win for only the third time in eight games (3-4-1).

Khudobin earned the second shutout of his career, while the Bruins improved to 2-5 in their last seven road games. □

Pacquiao fight could be in Macau or Singapore

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Manny Pacquiao may meet an old foe in a new place in September.

Promoter Bob Arum said he is trying to put together a fifth fight between Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez and shopping it to casinos in Macau and Singapore.

He said Saturday night at the Brandon Rios-Mike Alvarado fight that the bout

would likely be at one of the Venetian hotel-casinos in Macau or Singapore.

"The thing we're waiting on is which one of their hotels they want to do it at," Arum said.

Marquez would be the most likely opponent for Pacquiao, though Arum indicated earlier that Timothy Bradley — who won a disputed decision over Pacquiao last year — is another possibility.

Marquez knocked Pacquiao out in the sixth round in December, flattening the Filipino fighter with a right hand that left him face down on the canvas for 2 minutes.

It was the first win for Marquez in four fights between the two rivals.

If Pacquiao meets Marquez, it could be held far from the Las Vegas Strip, where they fought all four of their fights.

The MGM Grand hotel would ordinarily figure to be the host for the bout, but the hotel reportedly is holding a September date for Floyd Mayweather Jr., assuming he beats Robert Guerrero at the hotel May 4.

Arum is in Macau this week for the fight card Saturday night at the Venetian featuring two-time Olympic gold medalist Zou Shiming of China in his pro debut. □

The Masters

Continued from Page 17

"I said to my caddie walking up 18, 'No matter what, we're playing for a green jacket in a couple of weeks,'" Stenson said. "That will be nice. That was the main goal coming here. And when I played as well as I did, put myself in a good position, I'm still trying to do well here and then give myself a chance to win this tournament."

On the other side of the Atlantic, Marcel Siem of Germany won the Hassan Trophy in Morocco. That moved him to the cusp of the top 50, but Siem fell short when Russell Henley closed with a 68 at the Houston Open. The best Siem could do was No. 51. Henley already is in the Masters from winning the Sony Open in January. Fredrik Jacobson of Sweden and Richard Sterne of South Africa also were added to the Masters field by staying in the top 50. Neither played this week.

Charles Howell III, the Augusta native who started the year outside the top 100, needed to finish no worse than fourth place alone at the Houston Open. He hurt himself with middle rounds of 72-70 at Redstone, but put together a late charge. Howell closed with a 66, but likely fell at least three shots short of having a chance.

"It was a nice finish," Howell said. "Probably not quite good enough for what I need to go to Augusta, but I played well. I gave myself a chance. It was a good effort, but good efforts don't get that invitation to Augusta." Geoff Ogilvy, who played 10 out of 11 weeks trying to get into the Masters, started the week at No. 50 and missed the cut for the second straight week. Ogilvy withdrew Sunday from next week's Texas Open, ending his hopes of returning to the Masters. The winner of the

Houston Open and Texas Open earn a trip to the Masters. Ogilvy last year fell one shot short of ending the year in the top 50 and assuring his spot at Augusta. Howell is not playing the Texas Open, either.

"I thought my best chance of getting in was the top 50," Howell said. "I played a ton of golf. I'm a little tired, to be honest."

Howell finished third at the Sony Open, and he lost in a playoff the next week at the Humana Challenge. What hurt even more was closing with a 78 in the Honda Classic and a 73-75 weekend at Bay Hill, costing him valuable ranking points. Howell said there was no point in looking back. "I'm not going down the road of disappointment," he said. "I played good. I would love to be in the golftournament. So would 300 million other golfers. I played well this year and I'm going to watch the tournament on TV. It's just horrible to watch on TV, to be honest."



Henrik Stenson tees off on the 18th hole in final round of the Houston Open golf tournament Sunday March 31, 2013 in Humble, Texas.

Associated Press

The addition of Stenson, Sterne and Jacobson brings the Masters field to 91 players expected to compete. There are no more than two spots available for the winners of the Houston Open and Texas Open if they are not already eligible, meaning this will be the smallest field at the Masters since 90 players competed in 2006. Stenson began his turn-

around last September when he tied for fifth in the Dutch Open. He took a big leap with his win at the South African Open, and then a tie for seventh in the season-ending event in Dubai on the European Tour. Last week, he tied for eighth at Bay Hill, which moved him up five spots to No. 53 and gave him a good chance at cracking the top 50 in Houston.□

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Lester, Red Sox shut down Yankees on opening day

By HOWIE RUMBERG

AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) - Jackie Bradley Jr. and the Red Sox were daring on the base-paths. Jon Lester and the Boston bullpen were aggressive against a barely recognizable New York Yankees' lineup.

The Red Sox looked as if they were in a hurry to put a dreadful 2012 season behind them. They're off to an impressive start, giving new manager John Farrell an 8-2 win on opening day Monday. "I think how you saw it (Monday) is how we can win a lot of ball-games," new designated hitter Jonny Gomes said. "It was kind of all there early."

Shane Victorino led a revamped Red Sox lineup with three RBIs and Bradley walked three times and scored twice in his big league debut. Boston's big day against CC Sabathia (0-1) came a year after it lost its first three games under Bobby Valentine and went on to a 69-93 finish.

Facing a Yankees lineup



Boston Red Sox's Jackie Bradley Jr., left, follows through after hitting a run-scoring ground out as New York Yankees catcher Francisco Cervelli looks on during the seventh inning of an opening day baseball game, Monday, April 1, 2013, in New York.

minus injured Derek Jeter for the first time since 2001 and just three starters from opening day a year ago, Lester (1-0) gave up five hits and two runs in five sharp innings against the defending AL East champions.

"It's big," Lester said. "It's obviously a lot nicer than the past couple of years to be on top 1-0 instead of going through a whole road trip without a win again." Yankees stars Alex Rodriguez, Curtis Granderson

Associated Press

and Mark Teixeira also are on the disabled list.

"You're talking about some of the best players in the game. It's going to be a little different," Sabathia said. "But we know what we have to do and who's

not here. That's not an excuse."

Bradley, meanwhile, made an immediate impact after earning a spot with a strong spring training performance. In his first plate appearance, the ever-smiling 22-year-old outfielder worked a one-out walk after falling behind 0-2. That helped Boston touch up the big lefty for four runs in the second inning - and start the angry rumblings of 49,514 anxious Yankees fans. Young No. 44 then stole a potential RBI hit from Robinson Cano with a running, twisting grab in a swirling wind in left field in the third. Bradley added an RBI groundout in the seventh.

All in a day's work for the unflappable rookie.

"I wasn't nervous. I was ready," Bradley said. "Just trying to do whatever I can to help the team win."

The punchless Yankees had just one hit after the fifth inning against five relievers in losing a season opener at home for the first time since 1982, after 11 straight wins.



Washington Nationals left fielder Bryce Harper (34) is congratulated by third baseman Ryan Zimmerman (11) after a first inning solo homer during the opening day baseball game against the Miami Marlins in Washington, on Monday, April 1, 2013.

Associated Press

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Sports Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) -- All it took was two at-bats on his first opening day in the majors for Bryce Harper to hit two homers - and hear some "M-V-P!" chants.

The Washington Nationals' other recent No. 1 overall draft pick, Stephen Strasburg, did his part, too, getting 19 consecutive outs at one stretch of his seven scoreless innings.

Yes, for the NL East champion Nationals - and their fans who lived through some tough times not that long ago - the present and future could hardly have looked brighter in a 2-0 victory over the Miami Marlins on Monday, Game 1 of a season lame-duck manager Davey Johnson declared months ago should be defined as "World Series or bust."

"You couldn't draw it up

Harper, Strasburg lead Nationals over Marlins 2-0

any better," Nationals first baseman Adam LaRoche said. "And to have the two youngsters go out, do what they did? ... Let Harper and Stras go to work. They didn't need us."

Harper, the 20-year-old left fielder coming off NL Rookie of the Year honors, hit solo shots over the out-of-town scoreboard in right-center field off Ricky Nolasco in the first and fourth innings. He sprinted around the bases both times, and after his second trip, he climbed back out of the dugout for a curtain call, pumping his right fist.

"You just shake your head in amazement. You don't see that too often from anybody, period. But to see him as a 20-year-old? He's just writing a book right now," new Nationals center fielder Denard Span said. "And he does it so calm, too."

It was Harper's first taste

of a season's start in the big leagues; he began last year in the minors before getting called up later in April.

"Pretty special moment," Harper said. "If I was 0 for 4, or 4 for 4, it wouldn't have mattered to me. Just going out there having some fun on opening day for the first time."

He's nothing if not exuberant, and Johnson joked afterward that Harper's dugout high-fives after homer No. 1 really hurt some palms.

"I'm glad he cut it down on the second one," Johnson said, smiling. "I was still stinging from the first one. I think a lot of people were." For the 24-year-old Strasburg (1-0), this marked the start of what should be his first full season in the majors, with zero pitch or inning limits. Shut down before the stretch run in September in 2012, he was domi-

nant against a trade-depleted Marlins lineup that features Giancarlo Stanton and little else.

The right-hander went seven innings, matching his career high, allowing three hits.

Asked if he could have pitched longer, Strasburg said: "If it wasn't opening day and the first start of the year, it would have been a different story."

Pitching to contact more than in the past, Strasburg had three strikeouts, zero walks - and needed only 80 pitches.

"I looked up in the sixth inning and he had, like, 65 pitches. I was like, 'Wow.' He has come a long way. Early on in his career, you look up in the sixth inning, and he's close to 100 pitches," teammate Ian Desmond said. "If he wants to be the workhorse that he is, he's going to have to pitch more games like this."

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Heat beats Spurs to close on NBA's best record

The Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) —

Chris Bosh scored 23 points, including the winning 3-pointer with 1.9 seconds remaining, and the Miami Heat beat the San Antonio Spurs 88-86 on Sunday night with LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and Mario Chalmers sitting out due to injuries.

Ray Allen had 14 points, Norris Cole added 13 and Mike Miller 12 for Miami (58-15), which swept the season series with San Antonio (55-18). By earning the head-to-head tie-breaker with San Antonio, the Heat essentially have a four-game cushion with nine remaining for the league's best record and home-court advantage throughout the NBA playoffs.

Tim Duncan had 17 points and 12 rebounds and Kawhi Leonard added 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Spurs, who a seven-game home winning streak snapped. Danny Green and Tony Parker added 12 points apiece and Stephen Jackson had 11.

Bosh finished 3 for 5 on 3s, including the final shot from straightaway in the closing seconds.

He let out a loud yell after making the shot and celebrated with teammates when Parker's jumper bounced off the backboard as the buzzer sounded.

KNICKS 108, CELTICS 89

NEW YORK (AP) — Carmelo Anthony had 24 points and 10 rebounds, and the Knicks extended their winning streak to eight games and moved closer to ending Boston's hold on the Atlantic Division title.

The Knicks beat the Celtics for the second time this week and won the season series for the first time since 2003-04, when they also went 3-1 against Boston.

New York climbed back into a tie with Indiana in the race for the No. 2 seed in the Eastern Conference, which would currently mean a playoff meeting with the Celtics. Jeff Green scored 27 points, and Paul Pierce had 24 points and 15 rebounds as the Celtics had a two-game winning streak snapped.

Boston has won the last five division titles since acquiring Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen in the summer of 2007.

The Knicks haven't won the division since the 1993-94 season.

BULLS 95, PISTONS 94

CHICAGO (AP) — Luol Deng scored 28 points, Jimmy Butler and Nate Robinson each added 16, and Chicago beat Detroit for the 18th straight time. Rodney Stuckey scored 25 points and Greg Monroe added 18 points for the Pistons, who have not beaten the Bulls since Dec. 23, 2008.

Chicago rallied from a 13-point deficit to tie the score 78-all with 9:27 remaining on Butler's dunk after a steal. Robinson then fed Deng for a layup for an 80-78 lead, the Bulls' first advantage since 1-0.

Deng and Robinson each hit 3-pointers to extend the Bulls' lead to 91-84. Stuckey's layup cut Chicago's lead to one with 1:27 left before Deng had a layup for a 94-91 lead. Charlie Villaneuva missed a 3 with 5.9 seconds left and Daequan Cook made a free throw.

Stuckey made a 3 before the buzzer for the final margin.

HORNETS 112, CAVALIERS 92

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Greivis Vasquez scored 25 points and Ryan Anderson added 23 to lead the New Orleans Hornets to a 112-92 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Sunday night. Anthony Davis had 17 points and 10 rebounds, Brian Roberts scored 15 and Eric Gordon 14 for the Hornets, who snapped a two-game losing streak, including a blowout loss to Miami on Friday.

Davis' double-double was his 17th, tops among NBA rookies. Kryie Irving returned from a shoulder injury and led the Cavaliers with 31 points and six assists. Cleveland, which lost its eighth straight, was 1-7 in Irving's absence. Tristan Thompson

son, Wayne Ellington and Mareese Speights each scored 12 points for the Cavaliers and Shaun Livingston had 11.

WIZARDS 109, RAPTORS 92

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bradley Beal scored 24 points in his return to the lineup, leading Washington past Toronto.

Emeka Okafor had 19 points and 10 rebounds,



Miami Heat's Chris Bosh, right, shoots over San Antonio Spurs' Tiago Splitter, of Brazil, during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, March 31, 2013, in San Antonio. Miami won 88-86.

Associated Press

and John Wall added 18 points and 10 assists for Washington. The Wizards, who came in having lost two in a row on the road, won their seventh straight at home and moved into a tie with Toronto for 10th place in the Eastern Conference.

Jonas Valanciunas had 18 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Raptors, losers of

six of their last seven. Toronto leading scorer Rudy Gay scored 11 points — about seven below his average — while being limited to 26 minutes due to foul trouble.

Toronto, which has lost six of seven, cut a 20-point third-quarter deficit to six twice in the fourth quarter before Washington pulled away. □

Personal Health:

Hidden dash of sodium threatens millions

JANE E. BRODY

© 2013 New York Times

Centuries ago, salt was more valuable than gold, but today the condiment has fallen out of favor. Now we know that its main component, sodium, can raise blood pressure, increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke.

A new report, prepared by experts from three leading universities, projects that a small, steady reduction of sodium in the American diet could save up to half a million lives over the next decade. And a more rapid reduction could save even more lives – as many as 850,000.

The Finns have already proved this projection. As described last month in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, since the early 1970s, when Finland launched a national campaign to reduce salt intake, daily consumption has dropped by 3,000 milligrams a day in men and women, with a corresponding decline in death rates from stroke and coronary heart disease of 75 to 80 percent.

In the last decade or so, many food producers have introduced low-sodium or reduced-sodium versions of popular products, including soups, vegetables, fish, sauces, cereals, nuts, dips and even chips. But Americans still consume far too much sodium – a third more, on average, than the amount recommended for an otherwise healthy person and more than twice the amount recommended for people with high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease or kidney disease.

Sodium is an essential dietary element, but a mere 200 milligrams a day is all one needs for good health. The average American, however, takes in 3,300 milligrams daily, primarily from salt added to foods prepared commercially and in restaurants.

The federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend a maximum of

2,300 milligrams of sodium daily – the amount in one teaspoon of salt – for an otherwise healthy person. The guidelines, and the American Heart Association, recommend an even lower limit, 1,500 milligrams daily, for about 60 percent of American adults: those already afflicted with ailments adversely affected by sodium, African-Americans (who are more susceptible to high blood pressure), and everyone age 51 and older.

Too much sodium in the diet causes the body to

British Columbia.

The researchers used three different methods to assess the benefits of sodium reduction and were struck by how similar the projected benefits turned out to be. One method was based on a randomized, controlled clinical trial of sodium reduction among men and women followed for 10 to 15 years.

A second method assessed cardiovascular risk indirectly based on the blood pressure effects of lowering sodium combined with drug therapy. And the third

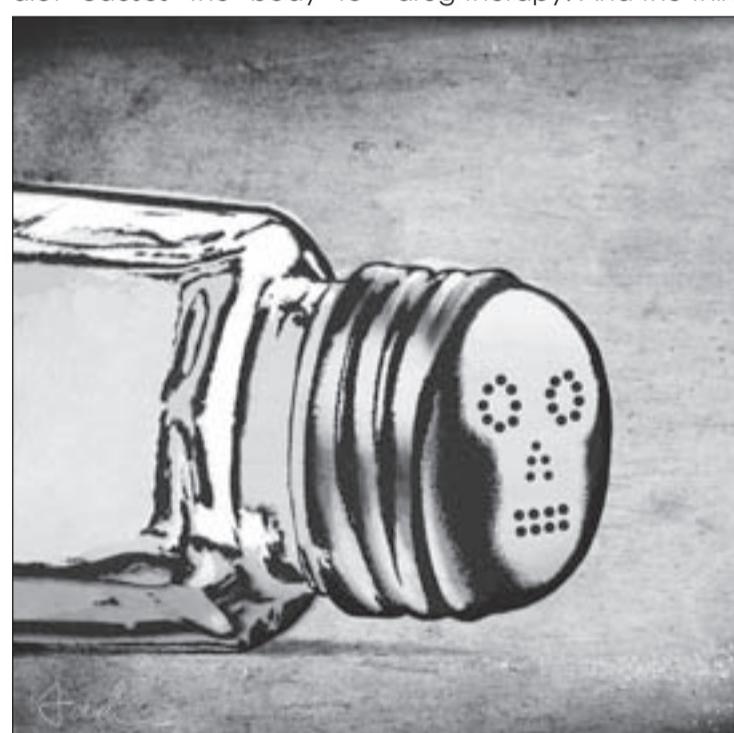
regulate our salt taste receptors in about six weeks." Salt is just one common dietary source of sodium. Others include monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking soda, baking powder, disodium phosphate and other compounds with "sodium" in their names.

Still, salt – sodium chloride – is the prime offender. About 80 percent of the salt in the American diet, however, is introduced in food factories and restaurant kitchens. Ten types of foods contribute more than 40 percent of the sodium consumed by Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The leading source is not a food that tastes especially salty, like pretzels or anchovies. It is breads and rolls, primarily because so much more of them are consumed than the other nine main sources of sodium: cold cuts and cured meats, pizza, poultry (often infused with salt water), soups, sandwiches, cheese, pasta dishes, meat dishes, and snacks like chips, pretzels, and popcorn.

The good news is that the marketplace is now replete with better choices, including many foods with less sodium than others and low-sodium or reduced-sodium versions of traditionally salty foods. It pays to check the nutrition information on food labels (and, in the case of fresh poultry and pork, the ingredients lists) and choose products with less sodium.

Analyses by the Department of Agriculture and data from manufacturers show very wide ranges in sodium content of common products. Three ounces of deli or packaged turkey breast may contain anywhere from 450 to 1,050 milligrams of sodium. A cup of canned chicken noodle soup can have as little as 100 milligrams or as much as 940 milligrams of sodium. And a cheeseburger at a fast-food restaurant can have 710 milligrams or 1,690 milligrams of sodium. □



A new report projects that a small, steady reduction of sodium in the American diet could save up to half a million lives in a decade.

(Anthony Freda/The New York Times)

retain water, placing an added burden on the heart and blood vessels. The new report, published in the journal *Hypertension*, projects that 280,000 to 500,000 lives would be saved by a 40 percent reduction in sodium intake, to about 2,200 milligrams a day, over 10 years. An instantaneous reduction to 1,500 milligrams could avert between 700,000 and 1.2 million deaths in 10 years, the experts calculated. These projections, based on computer simulations and models, were developed by research groups from the University of California, San Francisco; Harvard Medical School; and Simon Fraser University in

method relied on population studies of sodium reduction and resultant deaths from cardiovascular disease, stroke and all causes.

"No matter how we look at it, the story is the same. There will be huge benefits in reducing sodium," said Pamela Coxson, a mathematician at the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations.

Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, the director of the center and senior author of the new report, said in an email that "if you lower sodium in your diet, your body starts to expect food to taste less salty, and that becomes the normal flavor of food. Lower-sodium diets down-

FDA approves first-of-its-kind diabetes drug

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Friday approved a first-of-its-kind diabetes drug from Johnson & Johnson that uses a new method to lower blood sugar — flushing it out in patients' urine.

The agency cleared J&J's Invokana tablets for adults with Type 2 diabetes. The once-a-day medication works by blocking the kidneys from reabsorbing sugar, which occurs at higher levels in patients with diabetes than in healthy patients. Regulators highlighted the drug as the first in a new class of medications that could help address the growing U.S. diabetes epidemic.

Analysts estimate Invokana could eventually grow into a blockbuster drug, generating more than \$1 billion in sales annually for J&J.

People with type 2 diabetes are unable to properly break down carbohydrates, either because their bodies do not produce enough insulin or have become resistant to the hormone, which controls blood sugar levels. These patients are at higher risk for heart attacks, kidney problems, blindness and other serious complications. Diabetics often require multiple drugs with different mechanisms of action to control their blood sugar levels.

Invokana differs from older drugs that work by shrinking the amount of sugar absorbed from food and stored in the liver.

The most common side effects of Invokana are yeast infections and urinary tract infections, due to the higher amounts of sugar passing through a patient's urine.

The drug also can cause a sudden drop in blood pressure when a patient stands up, which can lead to dizziness or fainting, according to the FDA.

The FDA said it approved the drug based on nine studies involving more than 10,000 patients. □

Tech firms bumping up perks to recruit, retain

MARTHA MENDOZA

AP National Writer

CUPERTINO, California (AP)

— Apple's ring-shaped, gleaming "Spaceship Headquarters" will include a world class auditorium and an orchard for engineers to wander. Google's new Bay View campus will feature walkways angled to force accidental encounters.

Facebook, while putting final touches on a Disney-inspired campus including a Main Street with a barbecue shack, sushi house and bike shop, is already planning an even larger, more exciting new campus.

More than ever before, Silicon Valley firms want their workers at work.

Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer has gone so far as to ban working from home, and many more offer prodigious incentives for coming in to the office, such as free meals, massages and gyms.

This spring, as the tech industry is soaring out of the Great Recession, plans are in the works for a flurry of massive, perk-laden headquarters.

"We're seeing the mature technology companies trying to energize their work environments, getting rid of cube farms and investing in facilities to compete for talent," said Kevin Schaeffer, a principal at architecture and design firm Gensler in San Jose. "That's caused a huge transition in the way offices are laid out."

New Silicon Valley headquarters or expansions are under way at most of the area's major firms, including eBay, Intel, LinkedIn, Microsoft, Netflix, Nvidia and Oracle. Many will be huge: Apple Inc.'s 176-acre (71-hectare) campus will be one of the world's largest workplaces. On the outside, many of the new buildings boast striking architectural designs and will collectively be among the most environmentally friendly in the country. Inside, there are walls you can draw on, ping pong tables, Lego stations, gaming arcades and free hair-

cuts.

Critics say that while some workplace perks and benefits are a good thing, the large, multibillion dollar corporate headquarters are colossal wastes of money that snub the pioneering technology these firms actually create.

"Companies led by older management tend to be very controlling, but when I look at people in the 20s or 30s, they're totally capable of working on their own and being productive,"



Facebook employee Noah Singer gets his hair cut by Charlotte Schaetzle at Johnny D's Barber Shop on the Facebook campus in Menlo Park, Calif., Friday, March 15, 2013.

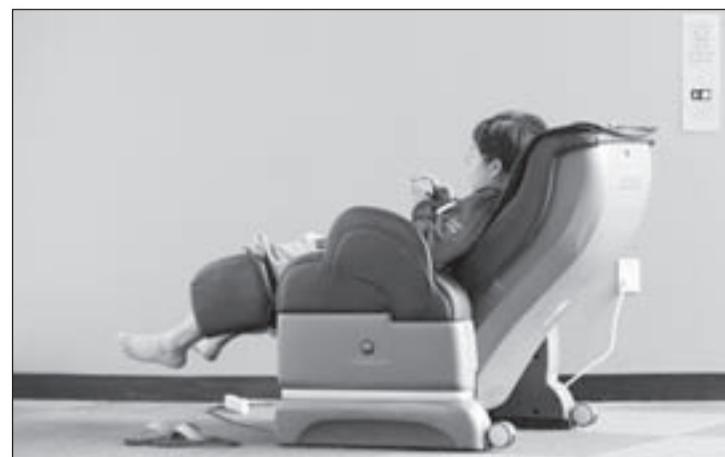
Associated Press

said Kevin Wheeler, whose Future of Talent Institute researches and consults on human resources for Silicon Valley businesses. "To have artificial structures that require everybody to be in the office at certain hours of the day is simply asinine."

Wheeler said he thinks Yahoo called everyone back to work "because they had gotten into a culture of laziness," and that the firm will likely loosen the restrictions soon.

Yahoo Inc. was, in fact, an early model of Silicon Valley's happy workplace culture, touting their espresso bar and inspirational speakers as a method of inspiring passion and originality. Today yoga, cardio-kickboxing and golf classes at the office, as well as discounts to ski resorts and theme parks, help it receive top ratings as one of America's happiest workplaces.

Companies say extraordinary campuses are necessary to recruit and retain



Google software engineer Jiang Chen campus sits in a massage chair at a Google campus building in Mountain View, Calif., Friday, March 15, 2013.

Associated Press



Facebook employee Noah Singer gets his hair cut by Charlotte Schaetzle at Johnny D's Barber Shop on the Facebook campus in Menlo Park, Calif., Friday, March 15, 2013.

Associated Press

top talent and to spark innovation and creativity. And there are business benefits and financial results for companies that keep their workers happy. The publicly traded 100 Best Companies To Work For in America consistently outperform major stock indices and have more qualified job applicants and higher productivity, according to the San Francisco-based Great Place to Work Institute. That may not always be obvious, however.

"People do work really, really hard here," Facebook spokesman Slater Tow said as an engineer glided past a row of second floor conference rooms on a skateboard.

"They have to be passionate about what they do. If they're not, we would rather someone who is."

He points out the Jumbotron frame for outdoor movies, the Nacho Royale taqueria, a bank branch with tellers standing by, an

About six miles north at Google Inc.'s headquarters, workers on one of more than 1,000 Google-designed bikes rolled from one building to another. Others stepped into electric cars, available for free check outs if someone has an errand. In one office, two young engineers enjoyed a beer and shot pool. Google doesn't want its Googlers to have to worry about distractions in their life. Concerned about the kids? Childcare is on campus. Need to shop and cook? Have the family dine at Google.

Dirty laundry piling up? Bring it in to the office. Bring Fido too, so he doesn't get lonely. There's a climbing wall, nap pods (lay down in the capsule, set the alarm, zzzzz), a bowling alley, multiple gyms, a variety of healthy cafes, mini kitchens, and classes on anything from American Sign Language to Public Speaking. In a shared, community garden, Googlers plant seeds, knowing that if they get too busy, a landscaper will pull their weeds.□

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US construction lifts up 1.2 percent in February

M. CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Spending on U.S. construction projects rebounded in February, helped by a surge in home construction, which rose to the highest level in more than four years. Construction spending rose 1.2 percent overall in February compared to January, when construction had dropped 2.1 percent, the Commerce Department reported Monday. Spending rose to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$885.1 billion, which was 7.9 percent higher than a year ago.

The advance was led by a 2.2 percent rise in private residential construction, which climbed to an annual rate of \$303.4 billion,



Heavy machinery work at a commercial construction site in Newtown, Pa. Spending on U.S. construction projects rebounded in February, helped by a surge in home construction

(AP Photo/Mel Evans)

the best showing since November 2008. Private nonresidential construction was up 0.4 percent while

public construction rose 0.9 percent.

Construction spending is expected to keep growing

this year, fueled by more homebuilding and broader improvement in the economy. For all of 2012, construction spending increased 9.8 percent, marking the first annual gain after five straight years of declines. Construction spending is still well below healthy levels. But it is slowly coming back, led by a recovery in housing that looks to be strengthening this year. Steady hiring and nearly record-low mortgage rates have encouraged more Americans to buy homes. More people are also moving out on their own after living with friends and relatives in the recession. That's driving a big gain in apartment construction and also pushing up rents. In February, spending on

single-family construction rose 4.3 percent, helping to offset a 2.2 percent drop in apartment construction. Residential activity is now 20.1 percent above where it was a year ago. The small 0.4 percent rise in nonresidential construction in February followed a 5.9 percent plunge in January. The February gains were led by a 4.8 percent rise in office construction and a 3.1 percent increase in health care, a category that covers hospitals and doctors' clinics. The 0.9 percent rise in public construction reflected a 1.1 percent increase in state and local government building. Federal construction dropped by 1.1 percent following a 2.1 percent decline in January. □

Hess selling Russia business to Lukoil for \$1.8B

NEW YORK (AP) —

Hess Corp. said Monday that it agreed to sell its Samara-Nafta division in Russia to OAO Lukoil, the second-largest oil company in Russia, for proceeds of \$1.8 billion as it continues to sell off assets. Samara-Nafta pro-

duces 50,000 barrels of oil a day in the Volga-Urals region. Hess has a 90-percent stake in the business and said the deal values Samara-Nafta at \$2.05 billion. Lukoil added that Samara-Nafta has about 85 million tons of oil reserves. The deal

will be reviewed by Russian antitrust regulators. Shares of Hess rose \$1.74, or 2.4 percent, to \$73.35 in morning trading. Hess has announced or closed the sale of its interest in a North Sea oil field, a shale deposit in Texas, and several offshore

oil fields near Azerbaijan. Including the Samara-Nafta sale, it expects \$3.4 billion in proceeds from the sales. Hess said it will use that money to reduce debt. In March Hess announced plans to sell its retail gas stations business, along with its

energy trading and marketing businesses, as it shifts its focus further toward exploration and production. It also intends to sell U.S. oil storage terminals and will close a New Jersey refinery as it exits the volatile refining business. □

Survey: US manufacturing grew more slowly March

PAUL WISEMAN

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A sur-

vey shows U.S. manufacturing activity expanded more slowly in March than February, held back by weaker growth in production and new orders. But factories hired at the fastest pace in nine months, an encouraging sign ahead of Friday's report on March employment.

The Institute for Supply Management said Monday that its index of factory activity slipped to 51.3 percent.

The index fell from 54.2 percent in February, which was the fastest growth since June 2011.

A reading above 50 indicates expansion. The index has signaled growth for four straight months. But

the drop in March growth was bigger than economists expected.

Jennifer Lee, senior economist at BMO Capital Markets, said in a note to clients that the March decline might be the first sign that companies are worried about federal spending cuts that took effect on March 1.

But Joshua Shapiro, chief U.S. economist at MFR Inc., cautioned that the index's drop last month might just be a one-month blip. Combined, the ISM reports for the first three months of 2013 "suggest that the manufacturing sector is now making moderate headway."

In addition to faster hiring, new export orders grew faster in March than February.

The ISM said the index was consistent with an annual rate of economic growth 3.3 percent from January



Dietz Werland works on the manufacturing assembly line during a media tour before an investment and jobs announcement event at the Chrysler transmission plant in Kokomo, Ind.

(AP Photo/AJ Mast)

through March, up from a tepid 0.4 percent growth rate the last three months of 2012.

Reports Monday showed

manufacturing is on the upswing in China and Japan, the second- and third-largest economies in

eration of Logistics and Purchasing. And Japanese manufacturers are more upbeat about business conditions than they were last year, according to the Bank of Japan's "tankan" index for the March quarter.

The U.S. economy has proven surprisingly resilient in the face of tax increases that took effect in January and federal budget cuts that began to kick in March 1.

The government reported Friday that U.S. consumers increased spending in February as their incomes jumped. The University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index showed that Americans were feeling more confident about the economy at the end of March. □

Stocks dip after manufacturing slows

STEVE ROTHWELL
AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—The stock market got off to a slow start in April, edging lower after the Standard and Poor's 500 index eclipsed its all-time high last week. The main catalyst was a slowdown in U.S. manufac-

JJ Kinahan, chief derivatives strategist at TD Ameritrade. The Dow is up 11.2 percent in 2013, the S&P 9.5 percent.

"The numbers have to be outstanding in order to drive the market higher," Kinahan said. "It's a different mindset when we're at

April is historically the second-strongest month for stocks, Deutsche Bank analysts said in report released Monday. The S&P 500 has gained an average of 1.4 percent in April, based on returns since 1960, making it the second strongest month after December.



Trader John Panin, left, and James Denaro consult on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Stocks edged lower on Wall Street Monday after an industry group reported that U.S. manufacturing growth cooled in March and was weaker than economists had forecast.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

turing growth last month. The decline in the Institute for Supply Management's benchmark manufacturing index for March was worse than economists had forecast. Stocks started falling shortly after the report came out at 10 a.m. and stayed lower the rest of the day.

The Dow Jones industrial average closed 5.69 points, or 0.04 percent, lower at 14,572.85 on Monday. The Standard & Poor's 500 index dropped 7.02 points, or 0.5 percent, to 1,562.17. Industrial companies fell 1 percent, the most in the S&P 3M, which makes Post-it notes, industrial products and construction materials, fell 66 cents, or 0.6 percent, to \$105.65.

Caterpillar, a maker of construction and mining equipment, dropped \$1.33, or 1.5 percent, to \$85.64.

Investors have raised their expectations for the U.S. economy as the market has climbed this year, said

these levels."

The S&P 500 closed the first quarter at an all-time high of 1,569.19, surpassing its previous record close of 1,565.15 set on Oct. 9, 2007. The index has recaptured all of its losses from the financial crisis and the Great Recession. The Dow broke through its previous all-time high March 5.

The market has risen this year because of optimism that housing is recovering and that employers are starting to hire again. Strong company earnings and continuing stimulus from the Federal Reserve have also increased demand for stocks.

Small stocks fared worse than large ones Monday. The Russell 2000, a benchmark of small-company stocks, fell 1.3 percent to 938.78, paring its gain for the year to 10.5 percent. It was the index's biggest decline in more than a month. The Nasdaq composite fell 28.35 points, or 0.9 percent, to 3,239.17.

The last meaningful setback for stocks started before November's election. The market slid 6 percent between Oct. 1 and Nov. 15 in the run-up to the vote and immediately afterwards on concerns that Washington would be unable to enact reforms to keep the economy growing.

Evidence that growth is continuing, despite the political tensions in Washington, have kept stocks on an upward trajectory since then, leaving investors waiting for dips to add to their holdings.

"I'd love to have some sort of a pullback here because I'd think it's an opportunity," said Scott Wren, an equity strategist at Wells Fargo Advisors. "But it doesn't feel like we're going to have one in the near term."

The yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which moves inversely to its price, fell to 1.84 percent from 1.85 percent. □

MARKET MOVERS

American, Orbitz end online legal dispute

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — American Airlines says it has settled lawsuits with Orbitz over the online travel agency's display of information about American flights and fares. The companies announced their settlement Monday. They did not disclose terms, and they declined to comment beyond a brief press release. The settlement with Orbitz faces review by the federal judge overseeing the bankruptcy reorganization of American and its parent, AMR Corp. American has been fighting with Orbitz Worldwide Inc. and other companies that distribute information to travel agents. American says it can better tailor offers to customers if it provides flight and price information directly to travel agents. Distribution companies claim that American wants to push them aside and reduce competition for selling airline travel. As the dispute escalated in 2011, American flights disappeared briefly from listings on Orbitz and Expedia Inc.

American had filed suit in federal district court in Fort Worth, Texas, accusing Orbitz and its largest shareholder, Travelport Ltd., of violating antitrust laws. In November 2011, a judge dismissed some of American's claims but allowed the lawsuit to go ahead.

GMX Inc. files for bankruptcy protection

NEW YORK (AP) — Oil and gas producer GMX Resources Inc. said Monday that it filed for bankruptcy protection, blaming low prices for natural gas. The Oklahoma City company filed in the Western District of Oklahoma. The filing includes its Endeavor Pipeline and Diamond Blue Drilling units. It does not include Endeavor Gathering LLC, a business in which GMX holds a 60-percent interest.

GMX says it pursued several strategies to increase oil production, make its supply chain and production more efficient, and reduce costs. However the price of natural gas has remained low and the company's oil and gas businesses require more spending. GMX said it hasn't been able to find any long-term solutions to its financing needs. GMX says it agreed to sell its operating assets and undeveloped acreage to the owners of company senior notes that are due in 2017. Those assets will later be subject to a public auction. The senior note holders have committed \$50 million in debt financing to cover its operating expenses.

The company expects the New York Stock Exchange to begin delisting procedures for its stock. It does not plan to contest those proceedings. □

American Greetings agrees to go private

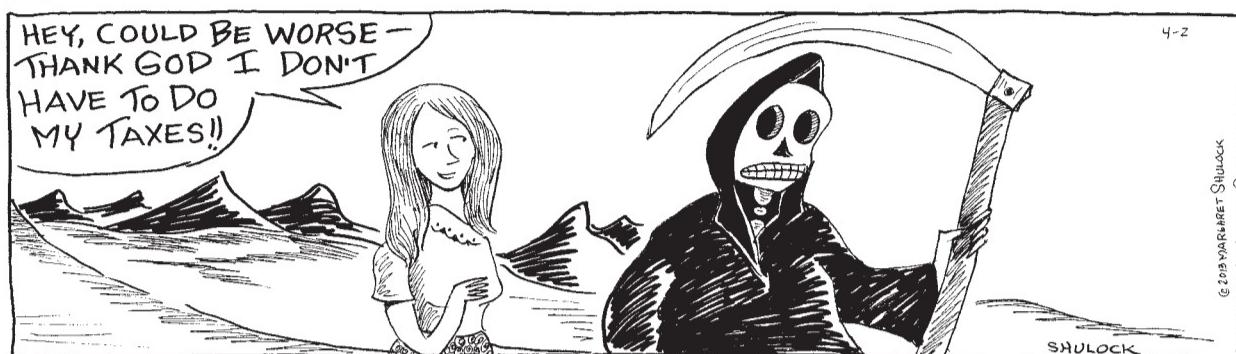
CLEVELAND (AP) — American Greetings has agreed to be taken private by a group led by some of its top executives in a deal that values the company at about \$580 million.

The greeting card and gift seller said Monday that a group formed by the Weiss family, including Chairman Morry Weiss and CEO Zev Weiss and others, will buy the shares of the company they don't already own for \$18.20 per share in cash. This is a 13 percent premium to American Greetings Corp.'s closing price of \$16.10 last Thursday. If American Greetings' board declares a quarterly dividend of 15 cents per share and the deal closed in July as expected, shareholders would receive \$18.35 per share. □

Mutts



6 Chix



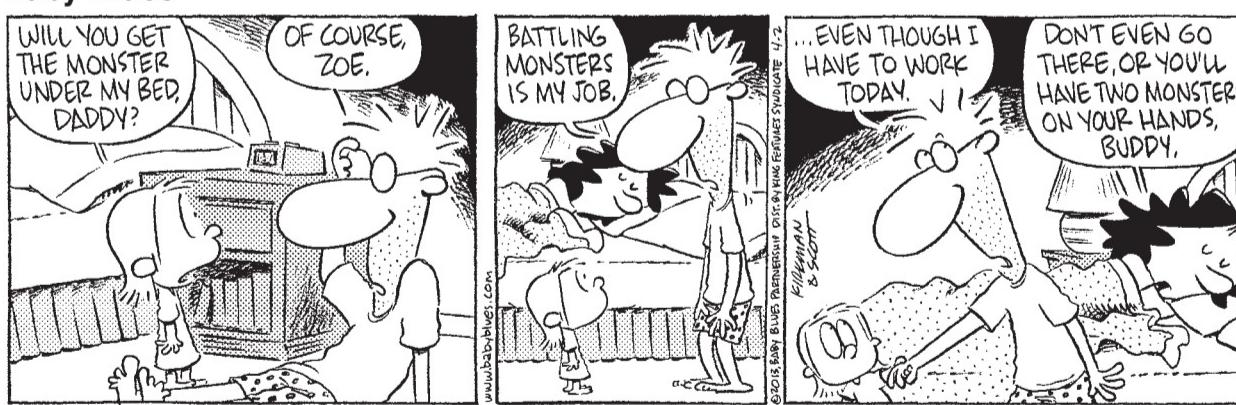
Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

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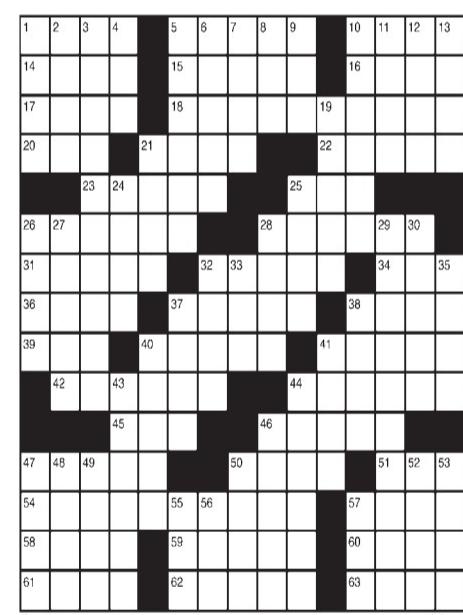
Difficulty Level ★★

4/02

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

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| 9 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 3 | | | | |
| 3 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 8 | | | | |
| 6 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 2 | | | | |
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Yesterday's puzzle answer



Monday's Puzzle Solved

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4/2/13

- 5 Mimics, 48 Talk wildly, 49 Actress Moran, 50 Volcanic output, 52 Not closed, 53 Make gentle, 55 Leprechaun, 56 "___ whiz!" 57 Sty resident
- DOWN
- 1 Handle roughly, 2 Egg on, 3 Made merry for an occasion, 4 Dobbin's dinner, 5 Like aging floorboards, 6 Puts in order of importance, 7 Border, 8 Place for a hearing aid, 9 Expert, 10 Soak in, 11 Circular edge, as of a teacup, 12 Lovers' ___; place for a tryst, 13 Omelet maker's needs, 19 Humiliation, 21 Close noisy, 24 Distorted, 25 Large brass instrument, 26 Back of the neck, 27 Martini garnish, 28 Tennis court dividers, 29 Set free, 30 Less common, 32 Nudge, 33 Piece of turkey, 35 Declare untrue, 37 Delight, 38 Barack's 2012 opponent, 40 Last, 41 Guitar's cousin, 43 Mr. Trump, 44 Beginning, 46 Sagas

Pope Francis still has most of his right lung

MICHAEL WARREN

Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina

(AP) — Does the pope have only one lung?

Despite erroneous reports that Pope Francis has lived most of his life with just one lung, the surgery actually only removed the upper part of his right lung, and his friends and family say he remains in good health for a 76-year-old man.

The Buenos Aires archdiocese and the Vatican have declined to provide medical reports or specific details about the surgery. Erroneous reports that his entire lung was removed have appeared in numerous media, including Argentine newspapers and The Associated Press, since as early as 2005, when Bergoglio was considered a potential successor to Pope John Paul II.

But the Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, put it this way after Bergoglio succeeded Benedict XVI: "I confirm that many, many years ago he had an operation in which part of a lung was removed." Lombardi added that it wasn't a handicap for Francis, and that

"those who know him have always seen him in good health."

Bergoglio's former spokesmen, Federico Wals and Guillermo Marco, said they didn't know any details about the operation, which would have occurred in the late 1950s. They said the diocese does not have his medical records.

The AP could find no record showing Bergoglio himself talking about his lung condition, apart from describing it to two journalists, Sergio Rubin and Francesca Ambrogetti, who wrote his authorized biography, "El Jesuita," and another book published last month, "Pope Francis: Conversations with Jorge Bergoglio." The "Conversations" book says Bergoglio was a 21-year-old seminarian when he fell feverish and was near death for days.

"The doctors were worried. Finally, they diagnosed a severe lung infection. Because they found three cysts, when his condition was stabilized and a prudent amount of time had passed, he had to undergo the removal of the upper part of his right lung."

"The pain was tremen-

dous," the book continues. "Since then, he's dealt with a pulmonary deficiency that, while it doesn't limit him seriously, it marks a human limit. Surely, that episode strengthened his understanding of what's really important in life."

The pope's last surviving sibling, his younger sister Maria Elena Bergoglio, also told the AP that doctors removed "a pretty big part" of one lung, but said her brother is "completely healthy."

Marco, who served as Bergoglio's spokesman for years in Buenos Aires, said "a good part" of one lung had been removed, but he told the AP that diminished lung capacity seemed to bother Francis less than other ailments that come with old age, such as lower back pain. That's why he wears orthopedic shoes and uses a cane at times, and "walks kind of crookedly," Marco said. □

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Americans oppose paying for storm-ravaged beaches

SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 4 out of 5 Americans want to prepare now for rising seas and stronger storms from climate change, a new national survey says. But most are unwilling to keep spending money to restore and protect stricken beaches. The poll by Stanford University released Thursday found that only 1 in 3 people favored the government spending millions to construct big sea walls, replenish beaches or pay people to leave the coast. This was the first time a large national poll looked at how Americans feel about adapting to the changes brought on by global warming, said survey director Jon Krosnick, a professor of political science and psychology at Stanford.

The more indirect options the majority preferred were making sure new buildings were stronger and reducing future coastal development. New building codes rated the highest with 62 percent of those surveyed favoring it.

Three in 5 people want those who are directly affected by rising seas to pay for protection, rather than all taxpayers.

Krosnick said the low favorability of sea walls and sand replenishment "reflect the public's fatalistic sense that it's more realistic to just give up the beach than to try to save it when other storms in the future will just wash it away again."

The nationally representative survey of 1,174 Americans conducted online by GfK Custom Research has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.9 percentage



This Wednesday, Oct. 31, 2012 file aerial photo shows a collapsed house along the central Jersey Shore coast.

Associated Press

points.

University of Miami geology professor Harold Wanless, who wasn't involved in the survey, said he was at a Miami Beach meeting on Thursday with business and political leaders on how to try to keep from losing their "hugely expensive" land. But they are afraid of spending money in vain attempts that won't work.

There are three ways the public can deal with the effects of rising seas on beaches, said coastal geology professor S. Jeffress Williams of the University of Hawaii. He is an expert on sea level rise and methods of adapting to it. You can "hold the line" with expensive sea walls, retreat and leave the beach, or compromise with sand dunes and beach replenishing.

Sand dunes helped protect the New Jersey town of Seaside Park more than its dune-less neighbor Seaside Heights when Superstorm Sandy hit last fall,

said Laurie Mcgilvray, a government coastline science expert.

Williams said the public's attitude about not doing much to protect cur-

rent beach development would be fine if it were 100 years ago. "But we've got tremendous trillions of dollars of a tourist economy that depends on the coast.

"You should expect that if you are going to use the coast, you need to put some money in to maintain it," he said. But people surveyed said money is an issue. When it came to the general question of who should pay to protect the coast, 60 percent of the public said it should be paid for by local property owners and businesses, not the general taxpayers. And when it comes to specific solutions, about 80 percent of those surveyed said the money should come from local property taxes, not federal or state income taxes. Nearly half, 47 percent, said the government should prohibit people from rebuilding structures damaged by storms.

The survey also found that 82 percent of the public believes global warming is already happening. About 3 out of 4 people said rising sea levels caused by global warming is a serious problem. □

Sumatran rhino footprints believed found on Borneo



In this undated photo released by the WWF-Indonesia, a scientist measures a footprint which is believed to be of a Sumatran rhino in a forest in Kutai Barat, East Kalimantan province, Indonesia.

Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Several footprints believed to be from critically endangered Sumatran rhino have been found on Indonesia's Borneo island, raising hopes for the existence of an animal long thought to be extinct in that area, a conservation group said Thursday.

The fresh tracks were discovered in February while

a WWF team was monitoring orangutans in West Kutai forested district of East Kalimantan province, according to a statement. A follow-up survey carried out by the team, along with government forestry officials and scientists from Mulawarman University, discovered more footprints, horn scratches at mud holes, trees used as rubbing posts and bite marks on plants. But the number of potential animals remains unclear.

The rhino has been thought to be extinct on Indonesia's part of Borneo since the 1990s.

Fewer than 200 animals still live in the wild in Indonesia and Malaysia, threatened by loss of habitat and poaching. □

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Book provides an entertaining look at digestion

MICHAEL HILL

Associated Press

"Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal" (W.W. Norton & Co.), by Mary Roach

We love food. We savor it, digest it, absorb the best and pass the rest.

That journey between the tip of your tongue and the seat of your pants might seem like a humdrum subject for a science book. But Roach — an author who has written smart but irreverent books about sex, corpses and space travel — manages to make it not only fun, but also funny.

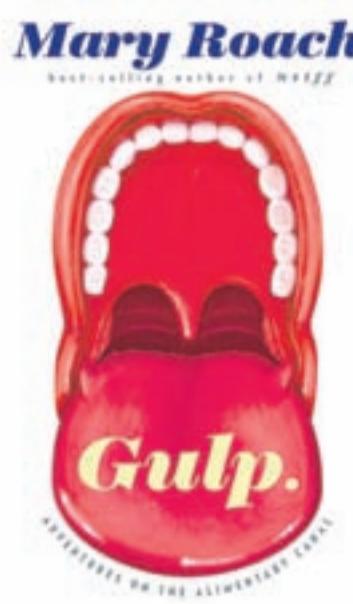
The wonders of digestion are a launching point for Roach to explore all sorts of oddities. Readers learn about the song sung during meals at chewing enthusiast John Harvey Kellogg's sanatorium ("I choose to chew/ because I wish to do"), researchers who pump pythons full of air, and get tips on rectal smuggling from an inmate in California (it's called "hooping" behind the wall).

It turns out a person's plumbing can malfunction in many strange ways. Roach appears to go over most of them, from the poor soul left with a peekaboo hole in his stomach after a gunshot wound and people with stretchable colons — which brings up Elvis. Did The King suffer from a "mega-colon"? And did it contribute to his death? Roach investigates.

Roach isn't shy about making the occasional bathroom joke. Actually, she's pretty much all in on bathroom jokes, which makes sense considering the subject. One footnote includes examples of people who make the embarrassing error of misspelling "per annum" (yearly) in financial reports as "per anum" (by way of anus). It's that kind of book.

This would get tiresome

except Roach is a smart writer and light on her feet. She seems to have a fondness for the scientists who devote their careers to things peculiar but important. And even the goofy jokes enliven a subject that could be as dull as a high school biology review on the role of intestinal villi. Amid the jokes, Roach synthesizes a bunch of fascinating biological research, and, yes, really does make it easier to digest. □



This book cover image released by W.W. Norton & Company shows "Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal," by Mary Roach. Associated Press

'BUCKWILD' star, 2 others found dead

JOHN RABY

Associated Press

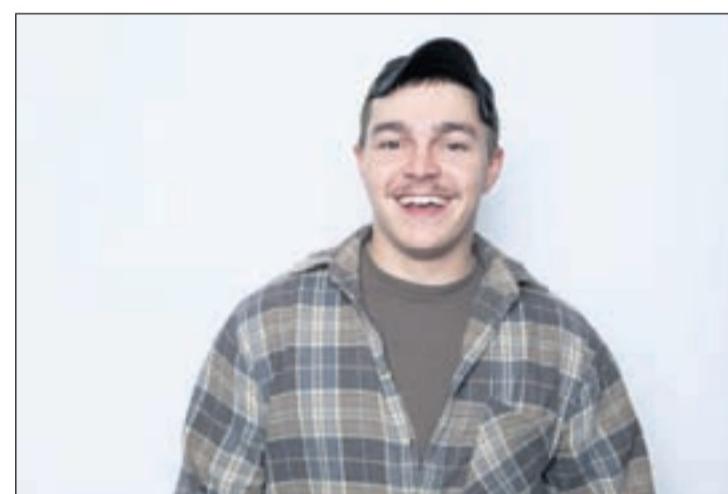
SISSONVILLE, West Virginia

(AP) — Shain Gandee lived for the outdoors, often going on muddy, off-road thrill rides in the hills near his West Virginia home. A recent late-night escapade ended in tragedy for the MTV reality show cast member and two others. The popular "BUCKWILD" cast member was found dead Monday inside a sport utility vehicle belonging to his family that was found partially submerged in a deep mud pit about a mile (1.6 kilometers) from his home near Sissonville, authorities said. Also inside were the bodies of his uncle and another man.

Kanawha County Sheriff's Cpl. B.D. Humphreys said the red-and-white 1984 Ford Bronco's muffler was below the surface and that mud covered the passenger side. No foul play is suspected.

Authorities said the cause of the deaths was still under investigation and they refused to speculate on what happened. If the muffler was submerged and the engine kept running, it's possible the cabin of the vehicle could have filled with fatal carbon monoxide from the exhaust.

Shain, nicknamed "Gandee Candy" by fans, was



This Jan. 2, 2013 file photo shows Shain Gandee, from MTV's "Buckwild" reality series in New York. Gandee was found dead Monday, April 1, in a sport utility vehicle in a ditch along with his uncle and a third, unidentified person, authorities said.

Associated Press

a breakout star of the show that followed the antics of a group of young friends enjoying their wild country lifestyle. It was filmed last year, mostly around Sissonville and Charleston. Many of its rowdy exploits were Gandee's idea. In one episode, he turned a dump truck into a swimming pool. Gandee was a true outdoorsman, shedding modern conveniences such as cell phones and computers. He loved to hunt, ride all-terrain vehicles and go "mudding," or offroad driving. He went mudding in the show's first episode and ruined his pickup truck's motor. "Shain always rides with these kids in four-wheelers and trucks," said a neighbor, Swanna Frampton, who had known

him since he was a small child. "They were just out riding and having a good time."

Frampton said the 21-year-old Gandee "loved to live and have fun. He was a great person. He did what (the show) wanted him to do, but he wasn't like that. He was a real person. If you needed help, if you needed something, he would come help you no matter what." Humphreys said Gandee, his 48-year-old uncle, David Gandee, and 27-year-old Donald Robert Myers were last seen around 3 a.m. Sunday at a bar and they told people they were going driving off-road. State police were getting ready to send out an aviation unit to search for the men when authorities

received a call Monday morning. Humphreys said the SUV was found by one of Shain Gandee's friends next to a trail used by four-wheel drive vehicles, about 15 miles (24 kilometers) outside of Charleston.

The terrain in the Thaxton Hollow area was "very muddy, very rough," Humphreys said, and responders had to use all-terrain vehicles to get to the site. Humphreys did not provide details on the condition of the bodies.

Kanawha County Commission President Kent Carper said the news was devastating for the small community near Charleston. "It's a very sad day for the Sissonville area and for these families," he said. "This is a small community, and most of us know directly members of these families. We're keeping them in our hearts and prayers."

MTV issued a statement saying it was shocked and saddened to learn of its star's death. "We are waiting for more information but at this time, our main concern is for the Gandee family and their friends," the statement said. "Our thoughts and prayers are with them. Shain had a magnetic personality, with a passion for life that touched everyone he met and we will miss him dearly." □

Walters mum on retirement reports

NEW YORK (AP) — Barbara Walters has returned to "The View" on Monday, after reports circulated widely the previous Friday that she would be retiring from television in May 2014. The television news legend is 83 years old.

She said photographers were waiting for her as she went to work on Monday, expecting she would discuss her future plans on the air. Instead, Walters had nothing to say about whether or not the stories were true, saying "I have no announcement to make." □



In this April 23, 2012 file photo, Barbara Walters arrives to the Matrix Awards in New York. Associated Press

This would get tiresome

'G.I. Joe' commands No. 1 at box office with \$41M

DERRIK J. LANG
AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — After a nine-month delay, "G.I. Joe: Retaliation" deployed to the top spot at the box office.

The action film starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Bruce Willis and Channing Tatum as the gun-toting military toys brought to life marched into the No. 1 position at the weekend box office, earning \$41.2 million, according to studio estimates Sunday. "Retaliation" opened Wednesday at midnight, which helped bring its domestic total to \$51.7 million. Paramount postponed the sequel to 2009's "G.I. Joe: Rise of Cobra" last May from its original June opening date to convert the film to 3-D. The last-minute change came just weeks after "Battleship," another movie based on a Hasbro toy, sank at the box office. At that time, Paramount had already begun its ad-



This film image released by Paramount Pictures shows Channing Tatum, left, and Dwayne Johnson in a scene from "G.I. Joe: Retaliation."

Associated Press

vertising campaign for "Retaliation."

"It certainly vindicates the decision," said Don Harris, the studio's head of distribution. "Any time you

make those sorts of moves, people always assume the worst. The truth is I'd seen this movie a long time ago in 2-D, and the movie worked in 2-D. It's not try-

ing to be 'Schindler's List.' This movie is intended to be enjoyed as a big, action spectacle."

Internationally, Harris said "Retaliation" earned \$80.3 million, making it the biggest international opening of the year. The film opened in 53 markets outside of the U.S. and Canada, including Russia, South Korea and Mexico.

After debuting in the top spot last weekend, the 3-D animated prehistoric comedy "The Croods" from DreamWorks Animation and 20th Century Fox slipped to the No. 2 spot with \$26.5 million in its second weekend. The film fea-

tures the voices of Nicolas Cage, Emma Stone and Catherine Keener as a cave family on the hunt for a new home.

Among the other new films this weekend, "Tyler Perry's Temptation" starring Jurnee Smollett-Bell and Lance Gross opened above expectations at No. 3 with \$22.3 million, while the science-fiction adaptation "The Host" featuring Saoirse Ronan, Max Irons, and Jake Abel as characters from the Stephenie Meyer novel landed at No. 6 in its debut weekend with a modest \$11 million.

Overall, the weekend box office was on par with last year when "The Hunger Games" continued to dominate in its second weekend of release with \$58.5 million. After a slow start, Hollywood's year-to-date revenues are still 12 percent behind last year, heading into next month when the summer movie season unofficially kicks off with "Iron Man 3" on May 3. "It's getting us back on track after many weekends of down trending box office," said Paul Dergarabedian, box office analyst for Hollywood.com. "Last weekend was a turning point with the strength of 'The Croods' and 'Olympus Has Fallen' doing better than expected. We're heading toward the summer movie season on solid footing. It's been a tough year so far." □

Thicke's video with nude models gets YouTube ban



This Sept. 15, 2012 file photo originally released by Point Foundation shows singer Robin Thicke performing at the "Voices On Point" Concert & Gala in Los Angeles.

NEW YORK (AP) — Robin Thicke's new music video is too hot for YouTube.

A representative for the R&B crooner said Monday that his unrated video for "Blurred Lines" was banned from the website. The clip features nude models prowling around Thicke and rappers T.I. and Phar-

rell.

A rep for YouTube didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment. The video is still playing on the music video website Vevo. Thicke's unrated clip was released last week and garnered more than 1 million views in days. It became a water cooler topic

on the blogs and entertainment websites. The original video was released a week before and has 1.3 million views.

Thicke said in an interview last week that he had sought the approval of his wife, actress Paula Patton, to shoot with nude models. □

Associated Press

Pioneering rock writer Paul Williams dies at 64

ENCINITAS, California (AP) — Paul Williams, a pioneering rock music journalist whose *Crawdaddy!* Magazine is considered the first U.S. publication to write seriously about rock 'n roll, has died in California. He was 64.

U-T San Diego says Williams died on Wednesday in an Encinitas care facility.

His wife, Cindy Lee Berryhill, tells the Los Angeles Times that Williams died of complications of dementia triggered by head injuries from a 1995 bicycle accident.

Williams was a teenager when he began publishing *Crawdaddy!* in 1966. It appeared 18 months before *Rolling Stone*.

Williams also wrote more than 30 books and helped introduce readers to the work of science fiction writer Philip K. Dick. He was Dick's literary executor. □

Cheating Our Children



PAUL KRUGMAN
© 2013 New York Times

So, about that fiscal crisis – the one that would, any day now, turn us into Greece. Greece, I tell you: Never mind.

Over the past few weeks, there has been a remarkable change of position among the deficit scolds who have dominated economic policy debate for more than three years. It's as if someone sent out a memo saying that the Chicken Little act, with its repeated warnings of a U.S. debt crisis that keeps not happening, has outlived its usefulness.

Suddenly, the argument has changed: It's not about the crisis next month; it's about the long run, about not cheating our children. The deficit, we're told, is really a moral issue.

There's just one problem: The new argument is as bad as the old one. Yes, we are cheating our children, but the deficit has nothing to do with it.

Before I get there, a few words about the sudden switch in arguments.

There has, of course, been no explicit announcement of a change in position. But the signs are everywhere. Pundits who spent years trying to foster a sense of panic over the deficit have begun writing pieces lamenting the likelihood that there won't be a crisis, after all. Maybe it wasn't that significant when President Barack Obama declared that we don't face any "immediate" debt crisis, but it did represent a change in tone from his previous deficit-hawk rhetoric. And it was startling, indeed, when John Boehner, the speaker of the House, said exactly the same thing a few days later.

What happened? Basically, the numbers refuse to cooperate: Interest rates remain stubbornly low, deficits are declining and even 10-year budget projections basically show a stable fiscal outlook rather than exploding debt. So talk of a fiscal crisis has subsided.

Yet the deficit scolds haven't given up on their determination to bully the nation into slashing Social Security and Medicare. So they have a new line: We must bring down the deficit right away because it's "generational warfare," imposing a crippling burden on the next generation.

What's wrong with this argument? For one thing, it involves a fundamental misunderstanding of what debt does to the economy.

Contrary to almost everything you read in the papers or see on TV, debt doesn't directly make our nation poorer; it's essentially money we owe to ourselves. Deficits would indirectly be making us poorer if they were either leading to big trade deficits, increasing our overseas borrowing, or crowding out investment, reducing future productive capacity.

But they aren't: Trade deficits are down, not up, while business investment has actually recovered fairly strongly from the slump. And the main reason businesses aren't investing more is inadequate demand.

They're sitting on lots of cash, despite soaring profits, because there's no reason to expand capacity when you aren't selling enough to use the capacity you have.

In fact, you can think of deficits mainly as a way to put some of that idle cash to use.

Yet there is, as I said, a lot of truth to the charge that we're cheating our children. How? By neglecting public investment and failing to provide jobs.

You don't have to be a civil engineer to realize that America needs more and better infrastructure, but the latest "report card" from the American Society of Civil Engineers – with its tally of deficient dams, bridges, and more, and its overall grade of D(PLUS) – still makes startling and depressing reading. And right now, with vast numbers of unemployed construction workers and vast amounts of cash sitting idle, would be a great time to rebuild our infrastructure.

Yet public investment has actually plunged since the slump began.

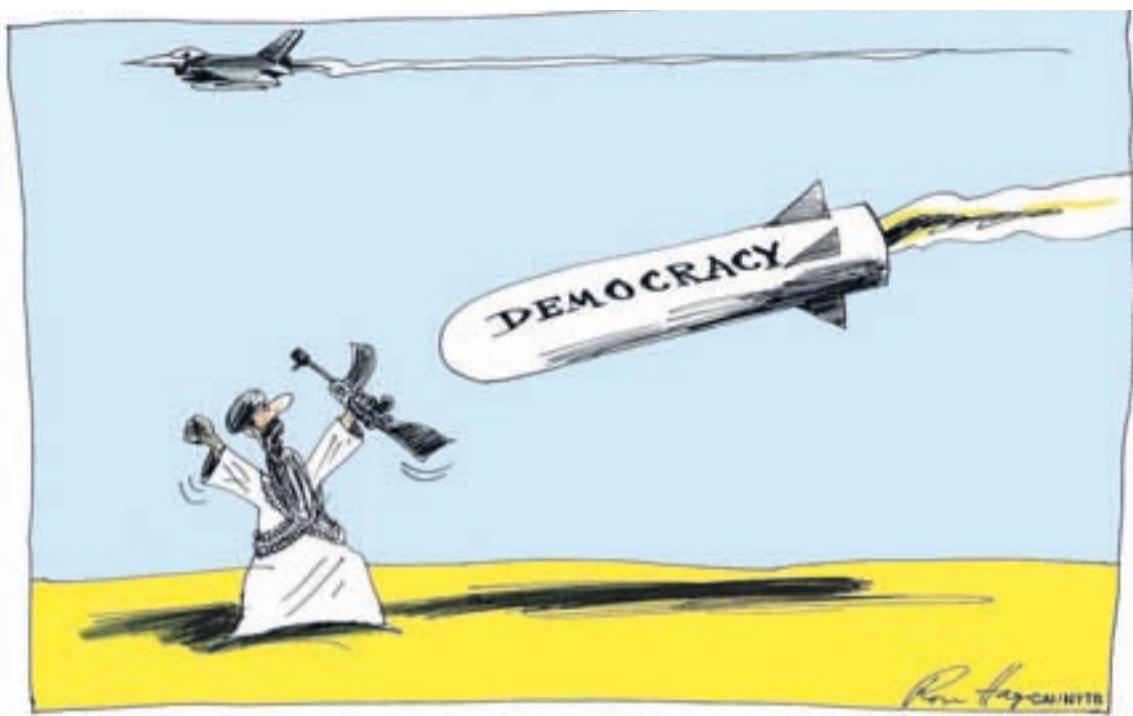
Or what about investing in our young? We're cutting back there, too, having laid off hundreds of thousands of school-teachers and slashed the aid that used to make college affordable for children of less-affluent families.

Last but not least, think of the waste of human potential caused by high unemployment among younger Americans – for example, among recent college graduates who can't start their careers and will probably never make up the lost ground.

And why are we shortchanging the future so dramatically and inexcusably? Blame the deficit scolds, who weep crocodile tears over the supposed burden of debt on the next generation, but whose constant inveighing against the risks of government borrowing, by undercutting political support for public investment and job creation, has done far more to cheat our children than deficits ever did.

Fiscal policy is, indeed, a moral issue, and we should be ashamed of what we're doing to the next generation's economic prospects.

But our sin involves investing too little, not borrowing too much – and the deficit scolds, for all their claims to have our children's interests at heart, are actually the bad guys in this story. □



Attack Of The Killer Surplus



GAIL COLLINS
© 2013 New York Times

Can a state be too rich for its own good? Well, things are definitely in flux in North Dakota.

It's not often we stop to ask ourselves: "What's going on with North Dakota?" But I believe this is the moment.

The state Legislature has been in a kind of anti-abortion meltdown, piling up bills with what-the-heck abandon. The House and Senate passed a "fetal heartbeat" bill that would prohibit abortions when a woman was about six weeks into pregnancy. They also each passed a "fetal pain" bill that would prohibit abortions at around 20 weeks. Plus a resolution giving fetuses the rights of personhood, which would not only prohibit abortion altogether, but would also outlaw some forms of infertility treatment and contraception.

There was also a bill banning abortions on the basis of sex preference or possible genetic defects, none of which would be detectable by the time abortions were already prohibited under some of the other bills. The governor pretty much signed everything they threw at him. "Folded like a tent in a blizzard," said an editorial in Fargo's daily paper. Opponents pointed out that while the House was busy protecting fetuses, it had killed a bill providing free milk or juice to impoverished schoolchildren who had actually been born. The Senate rectified that embarrassment, sort of.

"They're taking the money we give to school districts for at-risk children and saying you have to use that money to provide juice and milk programs," said Corey

Mock, an assistant minority leader in the House.

Things are in flux in North Dakota. Anything could happen with the milk money. Or the amendment to one anti-abortion bill that would end a federally funded sex education program for homeless teenagers. The bills the governor signed will probably be challenged in court, including a law requiring doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges with a local hospital, which could doom the state's lone abortion provider, the Red River Women's Clinic.

North Dakota has a strong libertarian streak that comes to a screeching halt when it reaches reproduction rights. Still, this seemed out of character. North Dakotans tend to be emotionally conservative; they don't approve of getting carried away. Last year, voters soundly defeated a proposal to abolish all property taxes and a "religious freedom" law giving employers the right to refuse to provide health coverage for contraception. A lot of people who found the ideas attractive still feared they carried the dreaded seeds of immoderation.

"Middle of the road; that's what they call the North Dakota Way," said Jack Zaleski, the opinion editor of Fargo's daily.

This is the state that gave us national figures like Sen. Kent Conrad, who was famous for speeches that involved his extensive use of very boring charts, and Sen. Byron Dorgan, who liked to remind people that he had been personally honored by the USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council. I always admired that about North Dakota. What happened?

For one thing, the more aggressive wing of the anti-abortion movement is trying to use the state to stage a test case against Roe v. Wade. In the last election, several of these groups targeted Curtis Olafson, a conservative Republican state senator who had derailed some of their more spectacular bills under the theory that they would just lead to court fights that North Dakota would eventually lose.

"I hated to see taxpayers' money go down the drain for an exercise in futility," said Olafson, who is now an ex-senator, having lost his seat in a nasty primary. So there's paranoia. But maybe the state also has too much money.

Until recently, North Dakota had a dwindling population and trouble balancing a very small state budget. Then came the oil boom and multibillion-dollar surpluses.

"We could bail out Cyprus, probably," said Mike Jacobs, the publisher of The Grand Forks Herald.

Now the employment problem is a shortage of workers. One of many issues that was not getting resolved while the Legislature worked on its abortion agenda is a preschool crisis in oil-rich parts of the state.

"They can't afford to keep staff at the child-care centers when fast-food restaurants are paying \$15 to \$16 an hour," said Kylie Oversen, a representative from Grand Forks.

When signing the fetal heartbeat bill, Gov. Jack Dalrymple admitted it would be immediately challenged in court, and he seemed to share Olafson's dim view of success.

But, hey, if legislators want to give it a shot, what the heck? They've got cash. "The Legislative Assembly before it adjourns should appropriate dollars for a litigation fund available to the attorney general," the governor suggested.

A shortage of money tends to keep things focused. When a legislature starts going off the rails, cool heads can pull the conversation back into line by reminding everybody that they're supposed to be focusing on "jobs, jobs, jobs." It gets a little tiresome after a while, but it does provide a much-needed sense of direction. While our Congress is certainly unsatisfactory in many ways, it's shown a lack of enthusiasm for having major fights over social issues in recent years, possibly because everybody wants to look jobs-jobs-jobs obsessive.

North Dakota led astray by lucre? Finally, we may have found a good side to recessions. □

Tough times lay ahead in post-Chavez Venezuela

FABIOLA SANCHEZ

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— Doing business in post-Hugo Chavez Venezuela is not for the faint of heart. Thousands of companies suffer under currency controls that all but deny them the U.S. dollars they need to import vital items into this oil-rich country, from food to cars to spare parts — even gasoline. Venezuelan firms must sell their wares at state-controlled prices that don't reflect the 22 percent inflation rate, the highest in Latin America. Even Venezuela's socialist government admits the controls don't work — but its attention is focused on the April 14 election to replace the late President Hugo Chavez.

It's a largely improvised economic policy that, despite oil earnings, has turned people's lives upside down and produced shortages of flour, coffee, butter and medicines. It's also a mess that will immediately challenge whoever becomes the president of this 28 million-person country.

Jeni Suarez, a 51-year-old Caracas homemaker, experienced the crisis first hand after waiting three months for a colonoscopy at a public hospital. When she got there, doctors told her they needed new parts from abroad to perform the procedure, and the deliveries weren't coming any time soon because the hospital didn't get dollars from Venezuela's government to buy them.

"I have an intense pain, and I don't know what to do," Suarez said after the appointment at Jose Maria Vargas Hospital.

Such economic headaches have, in fact, defined much of the late president's legacy here.

Chavez imposed draconian currency controls a decade ago to punish business leaders who had mounted a crippling opposition strike. He was also trying to stem the flight of dollars abroad as political instability spooked investors.

"The policy of currency controls is very negative for the country and hasn't met any of its objectives," said Alejandro Grisanti, an analyst at investment bank Barclays Capital. "It hasn't stopped capital flight. It

Only Capriles has suggested a possible way of injecting more dollars into the economy: Ending subsidized oil exports to Cuba that began under Chavez. The late leader had aided his allies by providing oil at

according to Omar Bautista, president of a national carmakers group that includes Ford, General Motors and Mitsubishi. And foreign suppliers are hesitant to sell to Venezuela because they don't know

businesses limited quantities of dollars at a rate that didn't reflect the bolivar's real black market value. The official rate is now about a quarter of what the dollar sells for on the black market.

At the same time, the government's own dollar supply may be diminishing. Oil income trailed off from \$5.6 billion in 2008 to \$3.8 billion in 2012, partly because of slumps in production and refining. The government also spent heavily to re-elect Chavez in October and help Maduro's candidacy after the president's March 5 death, further squeezing the dollar supply to private businesses.

As long as government dollar sales are frozen, "foreign exporters are not going to start selling to us," said Carlos Larrazabal, president of one of Venezuela's largest business chambers. "We cannot understand how it can be that we have a country with an oil price of more than 100 dollars per barrel and we have this scarcity of currency."

In a bid to inject some liquidity into the economy — and a tacit admission that the currency controls aren't working — Maduro's interim government held a one-day auction of \$200 million last week.

Jorge Roig, vice president of the Fedecamaras business chamber, said the rules for bidders were late in coming, overly complicated and discouraged small and medium-size firms from participating. At least \$1 billion more is needed to keep companies rolling, Roig told Caracas' Union Radio on Wednesday.

The Venezuelan Association of Medical, Dental and Laboratory Equipment says its members collectively owe \$300 million for past imports, which were suspended in November because they couldn't pay. "There are no test tubes to collect blood samples. There are no colostomy bags. No electrocardiogram paper. No X-ray plates," said Anerlin Garcia, the group's executive director. □



A protester holds up a fake bill that reads in Spanish "This is the revolution. Poor Bolivar" with the value of 100 crossed out and 54 written next to it, at a demonstration in Caracas, Venezuela. Thousands of companies suffer under currency controls that all but deny them the U.S. dollars they need to import vital items into this oil-rich country, from food to cars to spare parts, even gasoline. Venezuelan firms must sell their wares at state-controlled prices that don't reflect the 22 percent inflation rate, the highest in Latin America. Even Venezuela's socialist government admits the controls don't work, but its attention is focused on the April 14, 2013 election to replace the late President Hugo Chavez.

(AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

hasn't stopped inflation, (and) it has been very costly for the treasury."

Neither Chavez successor Nicolas Maduro nor opposition candidate Gov. Henrique Capriles has delivered specific proposals to address the crisis, said Alejandro Gutierrez, an economics professor at the University of the Andes. The most effective solution would likely involve unpopular measures such as a mass devaluation of the currency to spur exports, or an end to price controls. Capriles has spent much of the campaign trying to assure Chavistas he will not take away their government-funded social programs, while Maduro vows to continue the late leader's legacy, which would include the controls.

"We are facing a transition situation, and they are going to wait until this situation is cleared up," Gutierrez said Monday.

preferential terms to more than a dozen countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Cuba receives Venezuelan oil worth around \$3.2 billion a year, estimates Jorge Pinon, a University of Texas energy analyst. Nicaragua gets about \$1.2 billion worth of oil, according to economist Nestor Avendano.

Yet whoever wins the vote won't be able to put off action indefinitely. The wave of national mourning for Chavez and the heated campaign have so far masked the plight of dollar-poor food makers, dairy farmers, ranchers and auto manufacturers. But consumers are feeling the shortages of appliances, automobiles and staples such as flour, coffee, butter and medicines. Venezuela's automakers are operating at 50 percent capacity because they don't have dollars needed for auto parts made abroad,

when or if they'll be paid, Bautista said in remarks reported by Caracas' El Universal newspaper.

"New (parts) shipments are being held back as long as we cannot honor these contracts," Bautista said. Even as Venezuelans fight for dollars, the country sits atop the world's largest proven oil reserves, with those exports delivering nearly \$1 trillion in revenues to the country since Chavez was elected in 1999. Thanks to oil, Chavez's government had invested \$500 billion on social programs since 1999, according to Planning Minister Jorge Giordani. Venezuela's poverty rate fell from 50 percent in 1999 to 32 percent in 2011 while unemployment dropped from 13 to 8 percent.

After the 2002-03 strike, Chavez began using the enormous influx of dollars as a political weapon, with the government selling